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INSIDE



Approved QC

Governor Juan N. Babauta has okayed the qualifying certificate application of Dai-Ichi Hotel Saipan Beach, making it the latest applicant to become eligible for tax incentives under the Investment Incentive Act of 2000.

Page 17



Deadly Blast

A thunderous car bomb tore apart a five-story hotel catering to foreigners in the heart of Baghdad on Wednesday night, killing 27 people and showing the continued vulnerability of civilians to terror attacks.

Page 30



Agitated Art

The self-portrait shows the head of a bearded young man with intense dark eyes, rendered in an agitated, expressionist style that seems almost abstract until you meet the artist.

Page 36

USDA: No action on NMC's loan without legal assurance

The U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development has opted to defer action on the Northern Marianas College loan application amid unresolved concerns over the borrowing's legality.

RD Administrator Arthur A. Garcia, in a Feb. 27 letter to House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial, said that "no further action

will be taken until the questions of project eligibility and legal authority to incur debt are fully resolved."

The federal agency raised issue on NMC's eligibility to qualify for the Community Facilities direct loan financing—a program administered by the Rural Housing Service, which is a

Rural Development Agency.

"NMC proposes to use CF funding to renovate a shopping mall for use as community college space to serve a new international student population," Garcia said.

He, however, cited RD Instruction 1942-A section 1942.17 (d)(1)(i) which

states that the funds may be used to construct, enlarge, extend or otherwise improve...essential community facilities providing essential services primarily to rural residents and rural businesses.

"Providing educational services to an international student population would

See USDA on Page 8

CDA rejects airline investment



LIBERTY DONES

WIDER CHANNEL

Maeda Pacific, the contractor for the \$4-million Promenade project, has widened the Garapan drainage system from the previous six ft. to a 24-ft. open channel. The drainage project is phase 1 of the pedestrian mall project, which began last January.

Authority deems project a high-risk proposition

By MARIAN A. MARAYA
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Development Authority passed up the opportunity to invest \$500,000 of CNMI funds in Palau Micronesia Air after assessing the business deal as a high-risk investment.

Chairman Sixto K. Igisomar told Gov. Juan N. Babauta that CDA board members voted five to zero to reject the proposal, mainly due to finance and marketing worries.

Following a thorough review of the investment proposition, the board concluded that "PMA's business plan is overly optimistic" without the backing of an adequate marketing plan.

"CDA, as an investor/shareholder, must look for 'value' in the investment, and as it now stands, it can lose its investment in one year," Igisomar expressed.

Babauta and Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente have endorsed this airline investment, spearheaded by PMA

See CDA on Page 8

Economic devt strategy OK'd

By MARIAN A. MARAYA
REPORTER



The Economic Development Administration, under the U.S. Department of Commerce, has approved the CNMI's 2003-2004 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which could pave the way for millions of funding assistance for the Commonwealth in projects designed to foster economic growth.

Commerce Secretary Fermin M. Atalig, currently the acting Finance Secretary, confirmed the plan's approval with



Atalig

the EDA regional office in Seattle, Washington. The CEDS has been approved since Oct. 1, 2003, according to EDA Community Planner Lloyd Kirry.

The CEDS, developed by a 19-member commission appointed by Gov. Juan N. Babauta, highlights a list of priority areas that the CNMI needs to encourage economic expansion.

See ECONOMIC on Page 8

Miss NMI '04 chosen tomorrow

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

Eight young CNMI women would be competing Saturday night for the 2004 Miss Northern Marianas crown when the pageant takes place at the Hotel Nikko Saipan.

Northern Marianas Beauty Pageant Association president Bill Bezzant said preparations are in full swing and all eight participants are ready to face the board of judges when they compete for the crown and other special awards.



Competing for the 2004 Miss Northern Marianas-Universe, 2004 Miss CNMI-International, and 2004 Miss

See MISS on Page 8

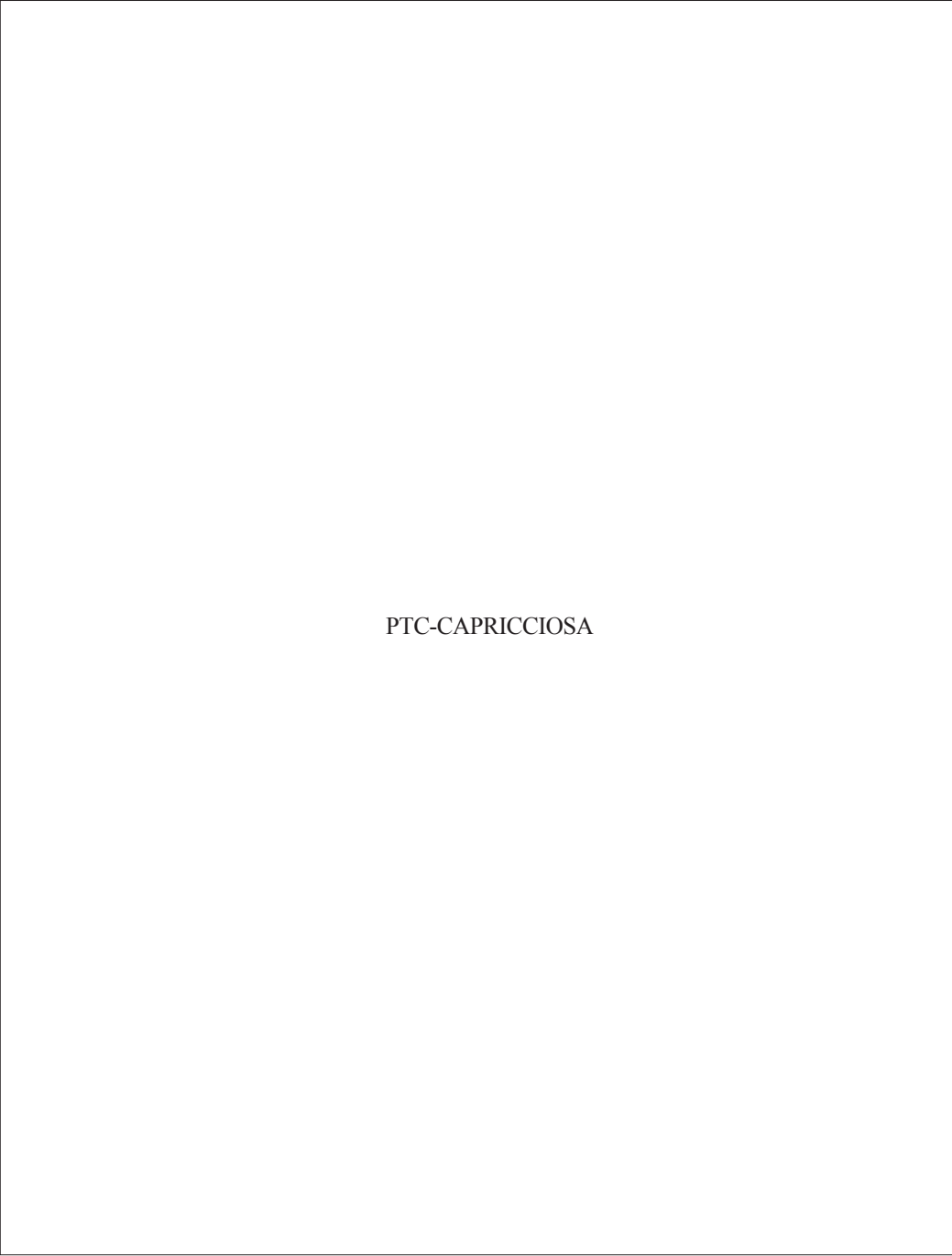
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CARS UNLIMITED

CENTURY TRAVEL

COMMUNITY

Briefs

SES parent teacher conference today

The Sinapalo Elementary School is inviting all parents/legal guardians to meet with their child's/children's teacher for a Parent Teacher Conference today, March 19, at 3:30pm-6:30pm, at the school campus.

Parents/legal guardians are encouraged to pick up their child's/children's report cards. If you are unable to meet the PTC schedule, call SES at 532-9521 to make an appointment to meet with school counselor Vanessa Quitugua.

ASVAB test today, tomorrow

Individuals 17-34 years of age who want to join the U.S. Army can take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test, which will be administered at the U.S. Army Reserve Center in Puerto Rico.

The tests will be held today, at 4:30pm, and tomorrow, at 12:30pm.

Interested individuals must bring a picture I.D. to process. Test-takers are urged to sign in early for the test at the U.S. Army Reserve Center, Puerto Rico. Call 322-6680.

If there are any questions, call station to station collect (671) 477-7666 and ask for SFC Abadam or SFC Cooper.

Mificpa to induct officers tomorrow

The Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants is celebrating its 10th year of successfully providing its member accountants with opportunities for career growth and development.

Mificpa will induct tomorrow its new set of officers and board of directors at the Aqua Resort Club Rey Lounge. The program will start at 6pm. Ticket price is at \$20.

Mificpa encourages all accountants and their friends in the CNMI to join the occasion. For more details, call IA Vilar at 322-4501, Malou Pasol at 234-9696 or Ronnel Calma at 234-2700.

OES Cultural Day set

Oelai Elementary School will hold its annual Cultural Day celebration on April 24, 2004 at the school campus starting at 9am to 2pm. This is a fundraising activity. The proceeds from this event will be used to support OES' ongoing improvement projects.

Everyone is invited. Please join us and support our student's needs.

Tinian to host agri-fair

The Tinian Agricultural and Food Fair Inc. will be holding a Mini-Agricultural and Food Fair on May 28-29, a Friday and a Saturday, at the San Isidro Fiesta Ground on Tinian.

All farmers are invited to participate in the agriculture and food fair competition. Categories in the competition are Produce and Ornamental Plants, Livestock, and Food.

The general public is also invited.

For more details, contact Dir. Ray Cing, Chairman at 433 9293/4339298; Dir. Joe Cruz, Vice-Chair at 433 3422; Dr. Allan Castro Sabaldica, Secretary at 4332576/ 287 0556.

1040 Form distribution set

The Division of Revenue and Taxation wishes to inform all CNMI residents that the distribution of the 2003 1040 forms and instruction has already begun. Those who would like to pick up a copy can drop by at the Office of the Division of Revenue and Taxation located at the DanDan Commercial Center from 8am to 4pm.

All residents are asked to pick up the forms during regular business hours. Please be reminded that the deadline for filing 2003 1040 is Thursday, April 15, 2004 at 12am (midnight).

KES day off set

Koblerville Elementary School is reminding parents and guardians of its students that there will be no school on March 24, which is the Covenant Day holiday.

HJHS report card day set

Hopwood Junior High School said that the school's 3rd Quarter Report Card Day will be on Tuesday, March 23, from 3:30pm until 6:30pm. There will be no school on that day. Parents and guardians are reminded to proceed to their student's homeroom to pick up his/her report card. Counselors and administrators will be available for additional support.

"If you are unable to come on this day, you may pick up your child's report card starting Thursday, March 25, from his/her counselor.

Wednesday, March 24th is Covenant Day. There is no school.

Please call the school at 664-5075 if you have any questions," the school said in a statement.

DES raffle draw postponed to May

The Dandan Elementary School has postponed its 6th Annual Cultural Day Raffle Drawing and Festivities from Feb. 14 to May 22.

"We apologize for the inconvenience this has brought upon the parents and others who have made efforts to participate in this school function. On behalf of the administration, teachers, parents, students, and the PTA officers of their school community, we thank you for your understanding and continued support in every way possible," said the school in a media statement.

| FLIGHT SCHEDULE EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, 2004 | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE | | | | | | | | | | | |
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CUC seeks \$3M USDA aid for sewer project

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. is seeking \$3 million in financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development to upgrade the Agingan treatment outfall pipeline.

Guam-based USDA-RD Western Pacific development manager Joseph M. Diego said in an interview yesterday that he met with the project's proponents—CUC officials—in the last two days.

“They are looking at a possible loan and grant assistance for the Agingan project,” he said.

CUC executive director Lorraine A. Babauta earlier said the agency would apply for grants or “very low interest loans” with USDA for the federally required redesign of the outfall.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had cited CUC for the faulty design of the existing pipeline. The facility does not extend beyond the cliff line as required to ensure that the

treated water goes deep into the ocean.

The EPA had provided \$1.3 million to correct the problem about two years ago. The CUC, however, has yet to identify the needed matching funds. Babauta said CUC is now short by \$3 million for the project.

Aside from the treatment facility problem, the CUC also faces major sewer problems, including recurring overflows in different villages on Saipan.

Based on previous citations by regulatory agencies such as the Division of Environmental Quality and the Coastal Resources Management, the recurring sewer problems are caused by poor system maintenance, possibly a design problem, and lack of facilities.

Early last year, CUC management acknowledged that the problem would persist until all major sewer projects on the island are completed.

CUC has pending sewer projects on Beach Road and other parts of Saipan.

Registration open for arts fest

The Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture will be holding the 23rd Annual Flame Tree Arts Festival on April 16, 17 and 18, 2004 at the American Memorial Park-west of Bell Tower.

Registration for booths will be open tomorrow, March 3, from 8am to 4:30pm and will be closed for registration on April 5, 2004.

The festival includes booths for housing traditional crafts and contemporary artist displaying, selling, and demonstrating their art works. There will be booths for food vendors and some for information purposes only.

The council is also asking the

general public—mainly performers and entertainers who are interested to perform at this festival—to call or visit its office on Capital Hill (next to the Post Office) and register.

Registrants will have the opportunity to select a good location for their booth based on a first-come first-served basis and the submission of the payment and necessary documents.

Interested individuals may contact the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs/Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture at 322-9982/83 for more information.

UOG board vice chair dies on Saipan

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

A ranking University of Guam official reportedly died yesterday morning on Saipan while attending a two-day annual regional board workshop.

Workshop participants, which included board members and presidents of colleges and universities in Micronesia, said they were about to start the Thursday morning session when UoG board vice chairman Enrique C. Castro fell to the floor.

Commonwealth Health Cen-

ter staff could not confirm the cause of Castro's death, as hospitals and clinics are prohibited by federal law to divulge any information relating to the admission or treatment of any person without the consent of patient or authorized family member.

Participants said Castro was on his way to get coffee and was talking with a regent from the College of the Marshall Islands when he collapsed.

“Everybody was in the room for the morning session when he collapsed. He fell and somebody rushed to try to catch him,”

said Palau Community College president Patrick Ubal Tellei in an interview yesterday.

He said hotel staff and colleagues rushed to attend to Castro. A few minutes later, police and emergency personnel came and brought Castro to CHC, he added.

Shortly before the workshop participants took their lunch break, Tellei said they were informed that the UoG official had died.

“They announced to us that he passed away. Everybody was moved. We prayed for the

family. It's rather sad,” he said.

Northern Marianas College Board of Regents chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds and PCC board chairperson Bilung Gloria Gibbons-Salii expressed grief over the news.

“It's very sad,” said King Hinds.

“We're very sorry to hear it,” Gibbons-Salii said.

Castro was on Saipan together with other UoG regents and UoG president Dr. Harold L. Allen.

Castro's family on Guam was reportedly immediately informed after the morning incident.

STAYWELL
+BLUE

ACE HARDWARE
+RED
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Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Olympic race against time

After seven years of planning, feuding and working, with barely 159 dawns left before the summer Olympics opens in Athens, 24 of the 39 new athletic venues for the world's oldest games are not yet complete. Oops. According to The Times' Alan Abrahamson, this embarrassing backlog also includes the Olympic stadium where August's opening ceremonies are tied thematically to the vast roof, which does not exist yet.

The Olympics are a fascinating social, political and economic phenomenon that happens to involve athletics. Suggested by the Oracle of Delphi 2,780 years ago as a PR gimmick to interrupt the cycle of wars among Greek city-states with a regular cycle of athletic combat, the Games have ever since been much more than games. They've become global entertainment, construction challenges, economic engines, tourism opportunities, propaganda platforms.

Besides assembling the world's greatest amateur athletes under an idealistic anthem of fellowship, they focus the world's attention on positive achievements for at least 17 days, especially if they increase a certain nation's medal count. The Games have become billion-dollar bonanzas for broadcast empires and enriching opportunities for victorious competitors. Even when confronting judging scandals and banned performance-enhancing stealth drugs, the Games reflect the priorities, dreams, rivalries, conniving, fears and foibles of their times.

This time, the Games also seem to reflect the procrastination and enduring fractiousness of their founding society, a new member of the European Union. Winning, then constructing and executing an Olympics, is, well, an Olympian task that consumes most of a decade. Greece, which opened the Games' modern era in 1896, was granted the 2004 Games in 1997. The home committee then foundered, reorganized and restarted and has been behind ever since.

A new airport is done, but flying is not yet an Olympic sport. According to Abrahamson's recent report, 12 of the 24 incomplete Olympic structures are less than 90 percent done. New subways have tracks but no operations. Greek officials have yet to even settle on new regulations governing prostitution, which is legal. Another reflection of the times—security—will cost \$2 million every hour.

Greek and Olympic officials, perhaps with no choice, profess confidence that My Big Fat Greek Olympics will be ready on time. It'll be a close finish, always good for ratings. Oh, one other little wrinkle: Greece holds national elections this weekend. Opposition conservatives could win, meaning an unpredictable political housecleaning starts Monday morning—with only 157 dawns left.

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Senate needs shot at redemption after hiring fiasco

After the guilty have been punished and the smoke of public opinion has subsided, many of us have thought that the series of incidents that led to the ghost jobs scandal at the Senate should now be buried and forgotten.

We may have drawn that conclusion too soon.

The reported plan by the Adriano leadership to hire additional full time employees to handle site preparations for Rota and Tinian sessions is much too hard to bear.

This plan makes it apparent that our esteemed legislators have not learned their lesson yet as they seem to think that the people of the CNMI are so feeble-minded as to not sense their disregard for proprietary spending of taxpayer money.

There are other more feasible alternatives to hiring FTEs to set up sessions on the two outer islands. And it should dawn upon our good senators that their constituents expect frugality and conscientious spending habits of them.

If the need is to have staff that would take care of the required logistics, venue preparation, printing and other needs during legislative sessions, it would make more sense to just have existing LB staff on Saipan shuttle to the two islands once a month for those sessions. Even if the sessions last for days each time, it would not cost the government as much as it would with the additional FTEs. Our senators should be reminded that after the ghost employees fiasco, they should all the more be cautious with their hiring practices, especially the kind that may be perceived as political and familial in appearance.

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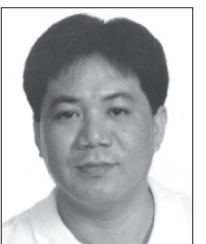
I must say that my heart bleeds for the many men and women who were gypped of their hard earned money via the alleged fraudulent schemes of officials of Saipan University.

This is not a simple case of fraud and misrepresentation. What the SU officials did to those hapless, unsuspecting victims is robbery of the grandest scale and should be severely dealt with. That the students had to literally scrape the bottom of the bin to come up with the money to pay their way to Saipan and into a supposed bright future makes it all the more disheartening.

Fraudulent, get-rich-quick scams like this—especially if the victims are underprivileged people, whose weakness makes them more

By RAFFY H. ARROYO

The views expressed are strictly that of the author. Arroyo is the business editor of the Saipan Tribune.



susceptible to scam artists—should be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

Considering that most of these people lost their lifetime savings, it should be up to the authorities, both local and federal, to see to it that the perpetrators of this economic crime are punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Without necessarily passing judgment on SU founder Soon Kyung Park's guilt, I think a long jail time would not be sufficient. It is imperative that most if not all of the money be returned with appropriate punitive damages.

How this is to be done is a good question. As much as the local government would want to help these victims, it could not cough out cash to somehow ease their pain. It also remains doubtful if money is readily available from Mr. Park and his cohorts to repay the students.

What the government could do at the very least is to make sure these poor people are given the chance to rebuild their lives. The problem, however, is that some of these people reportedly prefer to just go back to their home country instead of taking on jobs here. This makes the need for a payout all the more urgent and critical.

In my opinion, the Administration has done well by providing the victims the support and means to pursue their case, although as far as the victims are concerned, more has to be done in terms of reparation. It would do better if the Administration gives more focus on this issue if only to make sure it gets addressed as a priority.

This controversy has the potential of further ruining the already much-maligned image of Saipan as a member of the American political family. It is important that this controversy be put to a close fast, equitably and fairly for all concerned.

Martha's case of extreme hubris

She thought she could do what she wanted—in this case, use inside information illegally to spare herself a financial loss—and that she could get away with it. But it ultimately led to her public disgrace.

During her trial and the long buildup to it, I often wondered why Stewart didn't just 'fess up:

"Yes, I got some information that made me think my stocks were going to tank. So I sold them. As a former stockbroker, I knew this was wrong, but for the moment greed got the best of me. And I regret it."

She might have been able to cut a deal with the federal investigators, plead to a misdemeanor, pay a fine, spend a few months in jail and then go back to icing elaborate wedding cakes. It would have been embarrassing, and probably would have hurt her business somewhat. But it would have been nothing like sitting in federal court last week and hearing that she'd been convicted of four felonies.

But Stewart and her stockbroker, Peter Bacanovic, apparently thought they could get away with their little crime. As her lawyer Robert Morvillo pointed out during the trial, Stewart couldn't have been motivated by money alone to do something that a jury has now said was illegal. The \$45,600 she saved by dumping her ImClone stock was a pittance compared to her total fortune of more than \$1 billion.

But Stewart had built an empire by doing things just so, and was

accustomed to having things her way. She must have thought she could have it in this instance too.

There was also evidence of greed. The wealthy, we have learned from other divas such as Leona Helmsley, are often quite penurious, seeking to claim every dime, to gain every advantage. Perhaps that's what gets them to their station in life. Stewart, we learned during the trial, billed her media company for tens of thousands of dollars for a personal vacation, when she could easily have paid for it herself.

She was also used to enjoying advantages that ordinary folks don't have. Confiding to a pal that she'd received some confidential information about her ImClone stock, she allegedly said, "Isn't it nice to have brokers who tell you those things?"—or words to that effect.

Stewart and Bacanovic—who claimed that he never told her about the imploding stock, and said they had an agreement to sell if it hit a certain low—seemed to be caught up in a private dance. This was their story and they thought if they stuck to it that all would be well.

They were undone by a 28-year-old assistant broker, Douglas Faneuil, who refused to be their fall guy and who never wavered on the stand while telling his version of what really happened.

Stewart is certain to appeal the jury verdict. But analysts are already assessing the potential fallout from her convictions. She is now a convicted felon—and, if the convictions are upheld, she's likely to do jail time. Her reputation has been battered; her company



By **SHERYL MCCARTHY**

Newsday

McCarthy is a Newsday columnist.

could be devastated. She might never again be allowed to play a major role in a publicly traded company.

And all because of hubris.

Some people are going to feel sorry for Stewart. But I'm not one of them. I don't think this was a frivolous prosecution or a witch-hunt of a powerful and successful woman. I see it in the light of the numerous corporate scandals that have unfolded in recent years, where CEOs, CFOs, accountants, mutual fund managers, stockbrokers, brokerage firms and banks have used all kinds of skulduggery to play fast and loose with other people's money.

It's important for the rich and well-connected to understand that they're not entitled to an endless array of perks, almost always at someone else's expense.

Character assassination sullies History Channel

By **DAVID SHAW**

Los Angeles Times

Early in my career, I had a city editor—an otherwise reasonable man, a talented journalist and a good friend—who nonetheless spun the most astonishingly farfetched conspiracy theories about the assassination of President Kennedy. In one of his more fevered imaginings—spun over his desk at work and over bourbon and poker in his home—my friend told a conspiracy tale in which a police officer in Long Beach, Calif., was murdered, in the police station, to cover up his role in the assassination and its coverup.

But not even my friend went as far as a History Channel documentary broadcast in November that argued—no, insisted—that Lyndon Johnson “murdered John Kennedy to become president and to avoid prison,” as one Texas lawyer said in the opening moments of “The Guilty Men,” one program in a 12-hour series called “The Men Who Killed Kennedy.”

The series, which covered various Kennedy assassination theories and was part of the History Channel's coverage of the 40th anniversary of the event, attracted virtually no media attention at the time, although outraged relatives and former colleagues of President Johnson did protest and demanded an opportunity to rebut the charge—and got nowhere.

When that protest intensified last month, the History Channel agreed to appoint a panel of three historians to “discuss the controversial theory and to review the program.” When their examination is complete, the History Channel has promised to broadcast another program featuring their conclusions about “America's fascination with the Kennedy assassination, (including) the credibility of this particular theory and the way it was presented.”

Credibility? Incredibility would be more like it.

I could understand such a theory being published in the National Enquirer or on some whacko Weblog or in a novel by Robert Ludlum or Richard Condon. But the History Channel is supposed to present, well, history, not preposterous and irresponsible speculation by folks repeating the hearsay rantings of folks now dead. (One of the key figures in the show is Barr McClellan, who repeats charges he made in a 2003 book “Blood, Money & Power: How L.B.J. Killed J.F.K.”—a book The New York Times characterized as containing “several passages of admittedly fictional projection.”)

How did the History Channel decide to descend into this ugly morass?

“The Men Who Killed Kennedy” aired in somewhat different forms in England in 1988 and again in 1995, and producer Nigel Turner was criticized both times for some of his assassination theories.

Executives at the History Channel say their program was “original” and was subject to “a review” beforehand. But they won't say who conducted that review and they won't answer specific questions on the program, pending the outcome of the examination by their panel of historians (Robert Dallek, author of biographies of Johnson and Kennedy; Stanley Kutler, professor of American Institutions at the University of Wisconsin and author of two books on Watergate; and Thomas Sugrue, history professor at the University of Pennsylvania).

They do, however, say they are “reviewing our review procedures,” and in a prepared statement announcing the appointment of the historians, Dan Davids, executive vice president and general manager of the channel, said, “Nothing is more important to the History Channel than the integrity of our programming.”

He also said he and his fellow executives “take (critics’) ... concerns about historical accuracy and fairness very seriously and are taking appropriate action.”

The “appropriate action” would have been to avoid showing “The Guilty Men” in the first place—or, failing that, to have retracted it and apologized for it immediately.

I'm all for a robust debate and responsible investigation of the Kennedy assassination—or any other momentous event in U.S. history. But this program was neither debate nor responsible. It was a farce.

It's true that nine times in the course of the one-hour, independently produced program, the History Channel's resident historian, Steve Gillon, reminded viewers that it offered “just one of the many theories about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.” But that's as close as the station came to a disclaimer.

I've long, albeit reluctantly, accepted the Warren Commission conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing Kennedy. It's not that I find the commission's arguments so persuasive. But while I remain open to—indeed eager for—a better explanation, every alternative I've heard so far seems even less persuasive.

One need not accept the Warren Commission findings, though, to be horrified by the History Channel broadcast of “The Guilty Men.” One need not even have been an admirer of Johnson.

Johnson could be—and often was—ruthless in pursuit of his objectives. It would not be difficult to make the case that the concept of corruption was not entirely foreign to Johnson's experience. But murder? Johnson as a presidential assassin—not the trigger man but the man who ordered and organized the killing?

Wait, there's more. “The Guilty Men” said Johnson ordered seven other murders—including that of his own sister. Johnson as a serial killer?

“Deep in the heart of Texas lie buried some of the darkest and most well-kept secrets that tell us who killed John F. Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963—and why,” says an ominous voice-over near the beginning of “The Guilty Men.” Then: “Those forces of darkness revolved around one of the state's most famous political sons—Lyndon Baines Johnson.”

The show went on to “document” what it called Johnson's “murderous cycle” and posited the theory that he had help in the Kennedy assassination from the CIA (allegedly fearful that Kennedy would abolish it), the FBI (whose boss feared that Kennedy would fire him), the military-industrial complex (supposedly worried that Kennedy planned to withdraw American forces from Vietnam), and various Texas oil billionaires (alarmed that Kennedy would end or reduce the oil depletion allowance that had helped make them billionaires).

The show also said Johnson feared imprisonment because of his association with Bobby Baker, a Johnson protege and Senate aide who was forced to resign after accusations of illegal activities and was later imprisoned after being found guilty of theft, fraud and income tax evasion.

Various elements of this far-reaching conspiracy theory have been advanced before, of course—mostly by the kooks who frequent the fringes of society and also by Oliver Stone in his 1991 film, “JFK.”

But not even Stone went as far as “The Guilty Men” in fingering Johnson, and Stone was making a movie—reprehensible as it was—not a program for the heretofore respected History Channel.

I hope their expert historians move quickly in their review, and when they return—as they inevitably will—with a report that there isn't a shred of evidence linking LBJ to the JFK assassination, I hope the History Channel—and its parent companies, Hearst, Disney's ABC Cable and General Electric's NBC—will have the good sense to make a public and abject apology.

If not, I've got this script I'm working on and I figure they'll be interested in it. It reveals the dark secret about how Harry Truman conspired with Mr. Blackwell and Elvis Presley's tailor “Nudie” to poison President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and make the cause of his death look like a cerebral hemorrhage—all because they thought a wheelchair-bound president did not inspire American men to buy fine clothing.

Shaw is a reporter for The Times.

Letters to the Editor

Saipan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.

An open letter to governor, BOE

I have mentioned on more than one occasion the need for the Governor's Office to work with and through the BOE Teacher Rep. in implementing the governor's Initiative within PSS. The BOE Teacher Rep. is the governor's appointee and the proper conduit for the governor to intervene on teachers' behalf. It is my belief that neither office, the governor nor BOE should be attempting to implement a plan for teachers without the input and services of the BOE Teacher Rep.

The BOE Teacher Rep. is the governor's appointee not just to represent teachers but to also assist the governor as a BOE member with his plans for improving the Department of Education. In the absence of a Secretary of Education, the BOE Teacher Rep. is the governor's only legitimate conduit for the governor to affect BOE policy. For the governor and BOE to continue debating issues about teachers without the BOE Teacher Rep. being involved would be contemptuous to teaches now that teachers have a BOE Teacher Rep.

The governor clearly has good intentions and the concerns by BOE are legitimate considering BOE is on the outside looking in—even though BOE chose to be in that position. The BOE Teacher Rep. and the Teacher Rep. panel that I have established is the means for a resolution to the differences between the Governor's Office and BOE. I would like to suggest that true respect be given to teachers by implementing the Governor's Initiatives through the BOE Teacher Rep.

I'm sure that I can be of help in this matter and I look forward to some form of notification to discuss this matter with BOE and the Governor's Office to reach a resolution, in the best interest of all the stakeholders in our education system.

Ambrose M. Bennett

BOE Teacher Rep.

Mallard not extinct

The article on the extinct Mariana Mallard is inconsistent. I recently moved to the United States but prior to moving I lived in Kagman 1. Every year during the rainy season, I would see a group of Mariana Mallards in a little wet land area. They may be in the preservation area, which is fenced in. To be positive in making this claim of not seeing this species of bird since the late 70's is not true. The bird still exists. This is my opinion. My last sighting was in mid to late 2001. Thank you

Adrian San Nicolas

Sioux City, Iowa

Saipan Tribune

CHNM's FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Forum aims to empower CNMI women

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

Some of the Commonwealth's most accomplished women achievers gathered yesterday at the Pacific Islands Club for a Women's Forum where laws and legislation that benefit the community were discussed.

House Rep. Janet Maratita and the Office of the Special Assistant on Women's Affairs jointly hosted the forum, which was held in recognition of the 16th Annual Women's History Month celebration.

With this year's theme, "Women Inspiring Hope and Possibility," yesterday's female participants talked about the challenges, sacrifices, and hopes the Commonwealth faces.

Yesterday's inspirational speaker was Superior Court Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona, who urged CNMI women to be motivated in pursuing their dreams.

"There are decisions we have to make. We talk and shape the world. Women have come a long, long way," Manglona said during her speech yesterday at the Charley's Cabaret in PIC.

Participants to the forum were also given the chance to interact and discuss new legislation that would help their children and their families, including child support.

Participants were also urged to support women—particularly those in the political arena—who would champion their concerns and issues in the hope that that they would be addressed.

The Women's Forum gave participants the chance to start a dialogue, share ideas and experiences, and discuss goals and the means to achieve them. The forum was part of the month-long celebration of Women's History Month.

The celebration will continue for the whole month as the Women's Affairs Office gets ready for the 2004 Miss Northern Marianas beauty pageant tomorrow night. The coronation begins at 6pm.

On March 31, the WAO will hold a man'amko health presentation where speakers from the medical and legal fields would be on hand to discuss the importance of living wills and other health-related issues relevant to senior citizens.



EDITH G. ALEJANDRO

House Rep. Janet Maratita, Superior Court Associate Justice Ramona V. Manglona, and Women's Affairs Office director Emi Palican hand to 2003 Miss Teen CNMI Remelyn Julene Guerrero a House of Representatives resolution recognizing her victory in winning several awards during the 2003 Miss Antilles beauty pageant. The awarding was held during the Women's Forum yesterday at the Pacific Islands Club.

On April 10, WAO, along with the Division of Youth Services and the Department of Public Health, would hold a Health Symposium at the Hyatt Regency Hotel-SandCastle Theater beginning at 7am.

ginning at 7am.

Billed as "Cervical Cancer: Empowering Women and Their Families," the health symposium is aimed at providing the community with cervical cancer-related information and preventive measures, with focus on the correlation between cervical cancer and sexually transmitted diseases, and HIV and related CNMI statistics.

CDA

From Page 1

president Alan Seid.

Press secretary Peter A. Callaghan said yesterday that despite CDA's decision to reject the proposal, the administration continues to seek ways to improve tourism and keep costs of inter-island travel low.

Igisomar, in a position paper, pointed out that before the business deal can go full swing, there are many hurdles to overcome, such as regulatory approvals, high operating costs, development of new routes, and an extremely formidable competitor: Continental Airlines.

The board also expressed worries over high operating costs in the, among others, hiring of high-paid management personnel, expensive pilot/cabin crew, and the type of airplane being leased.

"Because of these high operating costs and overly optimistic revenue targets, the initial capital raised is inadequate to sustain the business through

its first year," CDA projected.

In the event of unscheduled aircraft maintenance, the cost of providing alternative airplanes in the form of short-term lease would also be costly, according to the development authority.

Air New Zealand's decision to completely pull out its investment, as well as that of alternative company, Airwork, gave credence to CDA's judgment to reject the proposal.

The board also cited the PMA board's lack of independent aviation expertise, saying that the body must be able to effectively give leadership and direction to management.

"Because CDA's investment would be a minority stake in PMA, it would not have any control over management. This has obvious investment risks and would require that CDA insist on an independent PMA board with at least one board member with aviation experience," said Igisomar.

CDA recommended that before PMA can become a viable airline, the firm needs more time, lower costs,

more marketing and sufficient initial capitalization.

"Before CDA can consider investing in PMA, it is recommended that PMA reduce its management and non-marketing costs, delay its start up of operations, raise sufficient capital and obtain the necessary operating crew and aviation expertise at an affordable cost," the board suggested.

But the development authority expressed no aversion toward making an investment commitment in an airline with proven track record, as opposed to a new airline with limited potential for success.

PMA reportedly is sticking to its April 20 inaugural take-off despite the collapse of its deal with Air New Zealand.

Airline president Seid was quoted in earlier reports as saying that the biggest hurdle is securing an Air Operator's Certificate. To achieve this, PMA must comply with standards of safety and be technically able to fly international routes.

landfill, Rota Airport extension, Garapan drainage project, to name few.

"Clearly one of the most important features for economic development in the islands is infrastructure to support development...The CIP priorities include infrastructure requirements in the schools, the community, health services and public services such as water and utility improvement.

"These long range priorities will generate economic activities that will not only improve the economic and social welfare of the communities in the CNMI but will also establish a solid foundation for sustaining the benefits that would result from...employment opportunities and learning new skills through training programs and on-the-job skills development," reads a portion of CEDS.

The document elaborates on the CNMI's future CIP plans and discusses CNMI economic development's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, among others.

USDA

From Page 1

not appear to meet the requirement of serving primarily rural students," Garcia pointed out.

USDA assured the speaker that it is working diligently to clarify the issues, noting that the agency shares the Legislature's concerns about the project.

Garcia stated USDA's position in a letter dated Feb. 27, 2004, in response to former Rep. Stanley T. Torres' Oct. 22, 2003 inquiry on NMC's bid to obtain a Community Facilities direct loan financing.

He said that USDA has been advised that the CNMI Attorney General's Office has been asked to render an opinion on the issue.

The college, in the meantime, has yet to submit its loan application to USDA pending the release of the AGO legal opinion.

"We've not submitted it. We're still studying the whole thing," Board of Regents chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds said earlier.

Regent Eloise Furey is now awaiting the legal opinion of the Attorney General as to the authority of the college to incur debt without the approval of the CNMI legislature—a requirement set by the USDA-Rural Development on Guam.

Former congressman Torres, a staunch

critic of resigned NMC president Kenneth Wright, submitted an opposition paper to USDA on the NMC loan, citing the college's lack of authority to incur debt without legislative approval.

Further, he said that NMC's submitted documents contained inaccurate or misleading information.

NMC earlier said that it would need \$8 million to \$10 million mainly to renovate the La Fiesta complex for the Pacific Gateway program.

NMC said it would either need a direct loan or a loan guarantee from the USDA to pursue the project.

Following the resignation of Wright last month, the board has moved to review the entire project, especially the use of the expensive La Fiesta mall.

This even as it noted that it can pursue the Gateway project apart from La Fiesta, which is proving to be a huge burden on NMC since its acquisition last August.

The NMC board aims to start the Gateway program in fall this year using the existing campus in As Terlaje.

NMC entered into a \$7.5-million purchase of La Fiesta mall last August for the program. The amount involved a deposit of \$3.5 million in federal grants, which was released through the Office of the Governor. The remaining amount would be paid by installment at \$200,000 a year. (*Marian A. Maraya*)

ECONOMIC

From Page 1

An executive summary of the 43-page CEDS recommended four priority areas: the development of local capacity for employment in private sectors; encourage long-term, sustainable industrial and commercial development; enhance and maintain infrastructure consistent with community needs; and preserve and enhance the unique cultural and environment of the CNMI for the next generation.

"Basically, it is a list of economic development projects that the commission listed as priority in the CNMI. The EDA office in Seattle has approved our submission. That means there's potential of millions of dollars coming in for economic development projects, such as water for the hospital, the Tinian landfill, Rota airport extension, etc.," Atalig enumerated.

The Secretary said he resumed the development of CEDS, which was last

updated in 1997, when he first assumed as chief of the Department of Commerce.

Following the CEDS' approval by the federal government, the CNMI's Commerce Department is now expected to work closely with local agencies to ensure that details involved in the construction of the various economic development projects are forwarded to the EDA.

"These are all federally funded projects, no matching required," said Atalig, noting that the CNMI is batting for \$11 million in federal assistance for each fiscal year beginning 2003 through 2005.

The Cabinet official noted that this assistance is on top of other CIP funding that the federal government offers the CNMI, such as Section 702 money.

Specifically, the commission listed 2003-2005 CNMI capital improvement project priorities to include Saipan technical assistance to CUC, Puerto Rico dump closure, CHC water, Tinian

MISS

From Page 1

CNMI-South Pacific titles are Gina Duenas, Rayna Camacho, Leiana K. Ogumoro, Cassandra DLG. Fejeran, Valerie Ann M. Babauta, Kenyelyn Arriola, Louiena Pangelinan, and Tracy Del Rosario.

This year's theme focuses on the celebration of CNMI beauty through the years.

The candidates would also vie for several awards, including Best in National Costume, Best in Swimwear, Best in Long Gown, and Miss Photogenic. Winners of the top three awards would represent the Northern Marianas in upcoming beauty contests this year.

The gate would be open at 5pm and contest proper would start at 6pm. The pageant director for this year is Angel Santos of the Angel School of Dance.

Prior to the coronation night, all candidates went through personality development trainings, speech and communication skills training, health and diet seminars, and several community activities.

In 2003, Miss CNMI Universe Kimberly Reyes competed in the Miss World pageant while Nancy Ripple represented the CNMI in the 2003 Miss International contest.

Miss CNMI South Pacific Olivia Tebuteb competed in the 2003 Miss South Pacific—the first time the CNMI sent a contestant—and came home with three major awards.

microl spin
+red

59 beach sites are found bacteria-free

All beach sites tested by the Division of Environmental Quality for marine water quality were found free from excessive bacterial concentration.

DEQ laboratory manager Clarissa Bearden reported this yesterday after conducting sampling tests on 59 beach locations on Saipan, Tinian and Managaha Island.

The DEQ regularly collects water samples from the islands' beach sites to conduct bacterio-

logical tests. Once a beach site is found contaminated with excessive coliform concentration, the DEQ warns the public to refrain from within 300 feet of the site.

The DEQ said bacterial contamination could indicate the presence of animal or human wastes in the affected beach site, but it added that the bacteria could have contaminated the waters through stormwater runoff. *(John Ravelo)*

Two vendors ordered closed

The Bureau of Environmental Health conducted sanitary inspections, during the week of February 22, 2004 to March 06, 2004 on the following business establishments. Their grades are as follow:

Grade "A"

1. LF Market, Chalan Kanoa
2. Chung Hua Restaurant, Chalan Kanoa
3. Classic Design I, Koblerville
4. Classic Design II, San Antonio
5. Dorie's Variety Store, San Jose
6. BJ Garden Restaurant, Chalan Lau Lau
7. Shell Gualo Rai Retail, Gualo Rai
8. Ken Restaurant, Garapan
9. Club Taboo, Garapan
10. Tun Kiku's Market, Garapan
11. Hula Girl Snack Bar, Garapan
12. Hafa Adai Bakery & Restaurant, Garapan
13. Sam's Bar & Restaurant, Garapan
14. 99 cents Super Market, Garapan *2/24/04 **2/24/04

Grade "B"

1. Coffee Care, Capital Hill
2. Tambayan Karaoke & Restaurant, San Jose
3. JD Store, San Antonio
4. J's Restaurant, Gualo Rai
5. Lucky Y Star (retail), Garapan
6. Tom's Market, Garapan
7. Chung Gi Wa Restaurant, Garapan
8. 99 cents Butcher, Garapan *2/24/04 **2/26/04
9. 99 cents Snack Bar, Garapan *2/24/04 **2/26/04

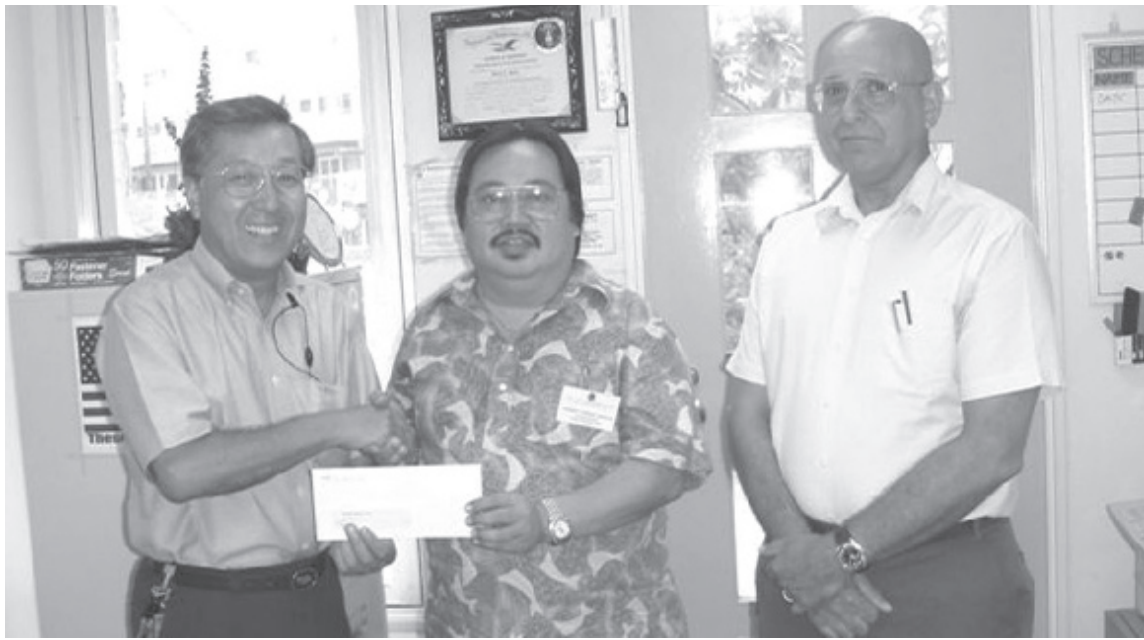
Grade "C"

None

Eating & Drinking establishments ordered closed due to serious violations of Health & Sanitation Standards

1. Anita B. Rosete/R.C. Mafnas Taxi #956 (illegal vendor) *1/13/04
2. Mr. Suave BBQ Corner, delivery vehicle #ACM 431 (illegal vendor) *2/28/04 **3/02/04

Note: *(establishment closure date) **(establishment re-opening date) There may have been changes to these grades since the date this information was released. For update information, call the Bureau of Environmental Health at 664-4870 or fax 664-4871.



\$1,000 DONATION

Northern Marianas College Interim President Antonio "Tony" De Leon Guerrero, center, was pleased to receive a \$1,000 educational tax credit donation to the college Wednesday from Pacific Micronesia Tours General Manager Ikuo "Ike" Katayama, left, as NMC Administrative Services Director Alfred "Al" Johnson looks on.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Council honors Covenant negotiators

The 8th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council recently adopted a resolution to pay tribute to the memory of the Marianas Political Status Commission members who successfully negotiated the political status that enhanced the aspiration and desire of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands to become a member of the American political family.

Resolution No 8SMC-IRS-26 also commends U.S. Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams, President Richard A. Nixon's personal representative during the Covenant negotiations.

The members of the Marianas Political Status Commission were chairman Edward DLG. Pangelinan; vice chairman Vi-

cente N. Santos; Juan Lg. Cabrera (dec.), Vicente T. Camacho, Daniel T. Muna, Dr. Francisco T. Palacios (dec.) Joaquin I. Pangelinan, Felix F. Rabauliman (dec.), Oscar C. Rasa, Manuel A. Sablan, and Pedro A. Tenorio, from Saipan.

Representing Tinian were negotiators Jose R. Cruz (dec.) and Bernard V. Hofschneider.

Representing Rota were negotiators Benjamin T. Manglona and Joannes R. Taimanao (dec.).

Former members of the Marianas Political Status Commission who participated in the negotiations were negotiators Olympio T. Borja (dec.), Herman Q. Guerrero, Felipe A. Salas (dec.), and Jose C. Tenorio (dec.)

From Saipan and Tinian were negotiators Francisco A. Hocog and Herman M. Manglona.

The resolution said that the people of the CNMI are now enjoying the rewarding experience of self-government as

a member of the American political family under the terms and conditions of the Commonwealth Covenant.

In honor and recognition of these individuals, the 8th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council will host resolution presentation ceremony on Wednesday, March 24, at 9am, at the Governor Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

The resolution was certified by Chairman Gregorio V. DeLeon Guerrero and Vice Chairman David A. Indalecio, and attested by Secretary Antonia M. Tudela.



Deleon Guerrero

Power outage tomorrow

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. is scheduling a power outage tomorrow, March 20, from 7am-4pm on Feeder 4. This scheduled outage is needed to continue maintenance work. Because of the extreme danger in working on energized lines, a power outage is necessary to ensure the line crew's safety.

The outage will affect areas connected to Feeder 4, including the entire Kagman I Homestead Area. No traffic lights will be affected, though.

CUC requests the cooperation and patience of people driving and residing in these areas while the work is completed.

to the leaders agreement.

I think it will require the Secretariat to react in a number of quite definite and immediate ways—I think there are very considerable implications for the way the Secretariat might do its work in the report if it's accepted—but the main issues about that regional cooperation, they're issues that are really going to take some years to develop and I think that it's not really possible to say at the moment where we might end up with all that.

Pacific security to head Auckland forum

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia/PIR)—The Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Greg Urwin, says regional security initiatives will feature prominently in next month's Pacific leaders meeting in Auckland.

Speaking from Samoa, Mr. Urwin said a report to be examined by Pacific leaders will recommend stronger regional cooperation, including anti-terrorism and trans-national crime initiatives.

The review of the Forum's role

and the operations of its secretariat was carried out by a group of Pacific elder statesmen.

It follows pressure by Australia for the Forum to step up its role in coordinating regional security measures.

The leaders are scheduled to meet in Auckland in the first week of April to examine the report, and will vote on the Forum's new directions when they meet again in August.

Mr. Urwin says the Secretariat will then be required to develop long- and short-term responses

shell





Business

Governor approves QC for Dai-Ichi Hotel

Governor Juan N. Babauta yesterday approved the qualifying certificate application of Dai-Ichi Hotel Saipan Beach making it the latest applicant to become eligible for tax incentives under the Investment Incentive Act of 2000.

"We are pleased to approve this Qualifying Certificate (QC) for the Dai-Ichi Hotel," said the governor. "We share the applicant's vision of a new Garapan. We have placed Garapan redevelopment as one of our most important objectives."

The law, known as Public Law 12-32, seeks to encourage economic development in the CNMI by offering tax breaks to businesses that engage in or implement a desirable project or business activity.

Businesses apply and are qualified for a qualifying certificate executed by the governor as recommended by CDA to allow for certain tax rebates or abatements.

The receipt of such incentives, however, may be subject to terms and conditions imposed

on the applicant by CDA in consultation with the Division of Revenue and Taxation.

Referring to the QC as a partnership between the Dai-Ichi and the tourism industry, Babauta noted that three large public projects are currently being developed in the immediate vicinity of the hotel, including the development of a drainage area south of the hotel to improve the runoff condition.

The projects, which also include the Garapan revitalization and the American Memorial Park improvement, total approximately \$15 million.

Under the qualifying certificate, the CNMI will not only abate future tax revenues for a period of 15 years but will also agree to a 25 percent break in current gross revenue taxes paid for the first 10 years.

In exchange, the applicant pledges to undertake over approximately 10 years, \$32 million worth of improvements to the hotel, including extensive room renovation, development of spa and conference center.

At A Glance

The following reflects the tax benefits provided to the QC applicant:

- 100% rebate on Business Gross Revenue over a \$300,000 base for years 1-10 (\$2,966,100)
- 50% rebate on BGRT for years 11-15 (\$2,318,800)
- 100% rebate on alcoholic beverage tax for a 15-year period (\$1,115,000)
- Total benefits equal \$6,394,900 or approximately 20 percent of the total project cost

"Once completed, the Dai-Ichi would benefit from over \$6 million in tax abatement over the term of this agreement, roughly 20 cents on each dollar spent on construction," the governor said.

The CDA board had also required Dai-Ichi to add two local jobs to managerial positions. Dai-Ichi was permitted to employ eight non-local managers but will be expected to employ four locals.



"Local job development is a key to our economic future and I commend the CDA Board for their leadership on this issue," he said,

He stressed support for the QC program provided that the tax benefits are consistent with the nature and scope of the planned project improve-

ment and renovation, and the QC projects are tied to local job creation.

When contacted yesterday as he boarded a flight to Guam, Dai-Ichi General Manager Mark Swinton, opted to withhold comment, saying he has not yet received official notification of the governor's action.

The QC application was forwarded to the governor by CDA on February 4, 2004. Under the law, Babauta has 45 days to either approve or reject the application.

The 45-day action period was to have ended tomorrow, March 20. (Raffy Arroyo)



Babauta

verizon
cmyk

cosmos
+blue/pink









CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

President Bush poses with 102 recipients of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching in the East Room of the White House Tuesday, March 16, 2004. The award is America's highest honor that is presented from kindergarten to twelfth-grade mathematics or science teachers.

AP

US minority groups on rise by 2050

WASHINGTON (AP)—For as long as there has been an America, whites have made up a clear majority. But that will change by 2050 when minority groups will be 49.9 percent of the population, the Census Bureau says.

Asians and Hispanics will see the most dramatic increases between now and midcentury, when the U.S. population will have grown by almost 50 percent to reach 420 million, according to bureau projections

being released Thursday.

America will get older, too. Nearly 21 percent of its residents will be age 65 or older, compared with 12 percent now.

The data highlight trends long predicted. But racial and ethnic changes are taking shape faster than expected, due in large part to higher-than-forecast immigration rates for Asians and Hispanics, said Greg Spencer, a bureau demographer.

Whites now represent 69

percent of the population, but their growth is slowing because of low rates of birth and immigration. Their total will grow 7 percent to 210 million, or 50.1 percent of the population, in 2050.

Those figures do not include Hispanics. The Census Bureau counts "Hispanic" or "Latino" as an ethnicity rather than a race, so they can be of any race, including white.

Between 2040 and 2050, the

Census Bureau expects the non-Hispanic white population actually will decline slightly because of a large number of expected deaths of baby boomers, who by 2040 will be at least 76.

Meantime, the Hispanic and Asian populations are expected to continue their explosive growth.

The Asian population is expected to more than triple to 33 million by 2050. Hispanics will increase their ranks by 188 per-

cent to 102.6 million, or roughly one-quarter of the population.

"Historically, we've been a black-and-white country. That's not true any longer, and even less true in the future," said Roderick Harrison, a demographer with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies in Washington, which studies issues of concern to minorities.

"A good deal of social history in the next several decades will be reflected in how we sort that

out, whether we achieve greater degrees of equality in these populations," he said.

The projections—the first released by the bureau since the 2000 head count—also show a burgeoning older population as healthier lifestyles and better medical treatment increase longevity. By 2050, 5 percent of the country will be 85 or older, compared with 1.5 percent now.

More than 4,000 gay couples tied the knot

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—More than 4,000 same-sex couples obtained marriage licenses in San Francisco before the state Supreme Court shut down the practice, a study released Wednesday shows.

Of the 4,037 same-sex couples who obtained licenses in the city starting Feb. 12, more than 91 percent came from California, according to a non-scientific analysis by County Assessor Mabel Teng's office.

The rest came from 45 other states and eight foreign countries, the analysis shows.

"It confirms to us that California benefited the most from the service we provided," said Teng, who personally officiated at the nuptials of more than 300 couples.

The analysis also found that more lesbians tied the knot than gay men: Of the 4,037 licenses issued, 2,311, or 57 percent,

were granted to women, authorities concluded by reviewing the first names of the applicants.

Eighty-two of the couples either chose not to go through with their weddings or did not return to City Hall in time to register their licenses, a critical final step, Teng said. That brings the total number of known couples to complete the process to 3,955.

Couples from Washington

and Oregon, which each sent 32 couples to San Francisco, were the next most-represented group behind California. Nevada, New York and Florida respectively had 24, 20 and 16.

Couples from Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland and Thailand accounted for the 17 licenses requested by residents of foreign nations.



Student kills himself at Wash. school

JOYCE, Wash. (AP)—A 13-year-old boy shot and killed himself in front of his classmates Wednesday in this small town, authorities said.

The shooting took place in front of about 20 students in an eighth-grade classroom, Sheriff Joe Martin said.

The boy's name was not immediately released.

The district recommended parents keep their children at school, where grief counselors were on hand. There are two schools on the campus, the 120-student Crescent Elementary and the 110-student Crescent Junior-Senior High.

Testimony may be blocked in Nichols' case

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Prosecutors in Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols' state murder trial want to block a death row inmate's testimony that white supremacist bank robbers were involved in the deadly blast.

A motion was filed Tuesday to limit the testimony of David Paul Hammer, who is expected to testify for the defense at Nichols' trial on 161 counts of murder for the 1995 bombing.

Nichols' defense attorneys claim co-conspirator Timothy McVeigh had substantial help from others in staging the bombing and that Nichols was set up to take the blame.

Hammer is expected to testify that McVeigh told him that there were other accomplices. McVeigh was executed in 2001.

Ariz. inmate pleads guilty in standoff

PHOENIX (AP)—One of two inmates who held a pair of guards hostage in a prison tower pleaded guilty Wednesday, admitting that he raped a kitchen worker and a female guard during the 15-day standoff.

Steven Coy pleaded guilty to 14 charges—including escape, kidnapping, assault and sexual assault. Prosecutors did not offer Coy anything in exchange for his plea in Maricopa County Superior Court.

"This is not a plea agreement situation," Assistant Maricopa County Attorney Jeannette Gallagher said.

Coy, 40, was under heavy guard Wednesday, with seven SWAT team members present and few people allowed in the courtroom. A sentencing hearing was scheduled for April 30.

crm

Artificial heart closer to US market

By **LAURAN NEERGAARD**
AP MEDICAL WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—A type of artificial heart moved a step closer to the U.S. market Wednesday, but it's not a permanent replacement—just a temporary device to keep certain near-death patients alive long enough to receive a heart transplant.

There are serious questions about who should get the CardioWest Total Artificial Heart, a complex and risky device that requires cutting out the bottom half of the heart to implant, scientific advisers to the Food and Drug Administration cautioned.

Still, they concluded it should

sell because it could benefit a small number of patients.

“These people are dying who don't have any good alternative,” said Dr. Judah Weinberger of Columbia University as the panel voted 10-1 to recommend FDA approval.

The FDA isn't bound by the panel's advice, but usually follows it.

Some 3,460 people were on the national waiting list for a heart transplant as of Wednesday; just over 2,000 receive a heart each year. It's not clear how many of the rest would qualify to try the CardioWest device while they await a donor.

“This is going to be a niche technology,” acknowledged Dr.

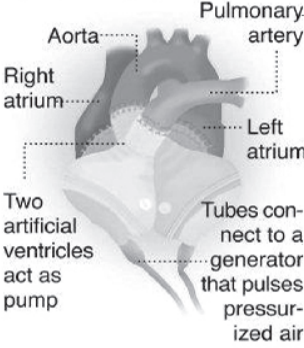
James Long of the University of Utah, who helped test the CardioWest and says his own hospital treats no more than two to four patients a year who could benefit from it.

But, “these are very sick patients who are dying. They have no alternative,” added Dr. Jack G. Copeland, who led the CardioWest's development at the University of Arizona.

The CardioWest isn't what the average person thinks of when hearing “artificial heart.” Initial attempts to use it as a permanent heart replacement 22 years ago, under the name Jarvik-7, failed. Experiments are under way with other, more advanced tech-

Artificial heart forms bridge to transplant

An artificial heart connects to a large pumping generator that keeps patients alive until they receive a transplant.



SOURCE: SynCardia Systems Inc. AP

nology that might one day offer that medical leap.

Instead, maker SynCardia Systems Inc. wants the CardioWest to compete with existing heart pumps, called ventricular assist devices or VADs, as a “bridge” to transplant for end-stage heart failure patients.

When one of the heart's bottom chambers, or ventricles, becomes too weak, attaching a VAD can significantly boost pumping power. But sometimes both ventricles fail, and rigging double VADs is difficult.

That's where the CardioWest may help—by replacing, not just boosting, the ventricles, potentially the first U.S. device to offer that step. Surgeons remove the heart's bottom half and sew the device onto the remaining atria, or top chambers.

Tubes snake from the patient's body to a washing machine-sized generator that powers the implanted device, making the CardioWest for in-hospital use, at least for now. (It's sold with more portable generators in parts of Europe.)

Eighty-one patients were implanted with a CardioWest in a study spanning the 1990s. Some 79 percent survived long enough to get a transplant—and 69 percent were out of bed and recovering well a month after that transplant, Copeland said.

Eight hurt by car during Ga. parade

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP)—A convertible in the city's St. Patrick's Day parade Wednesday sped through an intersection and slammed into spectators and three members of a marching band. Eight people were injured.

Most of the injured were treated for broken bones, cuts and bruises, but none suffered life-threatening injuries. Initial police reports said up to 12 people had been hospitalized, but authorities later revised the number to eight.

The car apparently failed to brake and sped through the marching band and into a crowd of parade watchers near the center of downtown Savannah, said Bucky Burnsed, police spokesman.

“We were sitting here ... smiling and having a good time, then all of a sudden, bam, this guy comes tearing through the parade and smashes into the band,” said Bobby Johnson of New York.

People were screaming “Stop! Stop!” as the car raced toward them, witnesses said. The car

was estimated to be traveling at about 30 mph.

“People were diving out of the way,” said Jeff Gronner of Savannah. “It's a miracle that more people weren't hit.”

The driver, identified as John Edward Sheppard, 62, was questioned by police, Burns said. Investigators determined the driver was not intoxicated, and had not suffered a health condition.

The vehicle, a Chrysler Sebring, was being examined for any possible mechanical defects, police said.

The vehicle, gold with green shamrocks taped on its sides, sustained minimal damage except for its windshield, which was smashed and had collapsed.

Six of the injured were treated and released. The injured included three members of the Monmouth County Police Pipes and Drum Band of New Jersey, which was marching in front of the car.

Snowstorm hits Northeast as spring nears

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—Residents of the Northeast shoveled, scraped and swept up after a snowstorm that swept out of the Midwest and dumped more than a foot of snow in some spots three days before the start of spring.

At least 14 traffic deaths were blamed on slippery roads.

Snow accumulations of up to 15 inches were reported in parts of southern and western New York, including a record 14.3 at Buffalo, and 10 inches piled up in northeastern Ohio. Boston had 7 inches by early Wednesday and parts of Connecticut measured more than 9.

“I'm tired of this,” Peg Woods said in Newton, N.J. “I just put my snow shovel away the other day.”

Many New Hampshire schools closed or delayed classes Wednesday.

day and some Connecticut schools also delayed their openings. Hundreds of Ohio schools canceled classes Tuesday, and several districts closed early Tuesday in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut as roads became wet and slippery.

“This will be winter's last hurrah, so we might as well enjoy it,” Tom Kearns, 53, said as wind blew the flakes through downtown Boston.

But co-worker Eric Argonaut, 32, said the snow meant one thing: “I've gotta fire up the snow blower and go to town.”

Flights at New Jersey's Newark Liberty International Airport were delayed by up to 90 minutes Tuesday, and more than 100 flights were canceled. Travelers were urged to call their carriers as a precaution Wednesday.

Planes were also canceled or

saiship mcdo



N. Korea increasing 'nuclear deterrent'

By SANG-HUN CHOE
AP WRITER

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea declared it is strengthening its "nuclear deterrent," raising the stakes Wednesday in its standoff with South Korea and the United States.

South Korea's interim leader called for a stronger alliance with Washington, dismissing a claim by the North that the South's parliamentary impeachment of President Roh Moo-hyun last week reflected U.S. interference to "install an ultra-right pro-U.S. regime" in Seoul.

With the unprecedented impeachment spawning uncertainty, South Korea has ordered heightened military vigilance against the North. It is also going ahead with annual joint military exercises with the United States, scheduled to begin Sunday, to test the allies' defense readiness.

Pyongyang on Wednesday accused Seoul of "kicking up a racket of confrontation with the North."

"This attitude ... is a grave provocation to the compatriots in the North," said North Korea's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, a government agency handling relations with the South.

There are fears that Pyongyang may use the South's leadership crisis to stall six-nation nuclear talks aimed at defusing the nuclear standoff.

North Korea said Wednesday it was strengthening its "nuclear deterrent"—

UNICEF: N. Korea starved for energy

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea lacks enough electricity to pump clean water or heat schools while food shortages still threaten children in the impoverished nation, UNICEF chief Carol Bellamy said Wednesday.

"There is a lot of water in the North, but they don't have the capacity to get that water to people because their electricity system is not working," Bellamy told reporters in Seoul after a recent three-day visit to North Korea.

She said her U.N. children's agency is trying to build a gravity-driven water system in the North.

North Korea's already dire energy situation has further deteriorated since late 2002 amid an international standoff over the communist state's nuclear weapons program. The United States and its allies cut off annual shipments of 500,000 tons of free oil, in retaliation of Pyongyang's nuclear moves.

Russia, China and South Korea proposed offering the North energy aid in return for a nuclear freeze and eventual dismantlement of its nuclear programs in the latest round of talks aimed at easing tensions. The United States and Japan expressed support, but wouldn't contribute to the proposed package.

The February talks, however, ended without major breakthroughs. North Korea insisted it would retain its peaceful nuclear activities, while Washington urged the dismantling of all atomic programs.

Food shortages also remain a grave threat to children in North Korea.

"We still estimate that there are about 70,000 children ... that are suffering from severe malnutrition," Bellamy said. "The challenges for children and the women obviously remain quite stark and quite significant."

North Korea has been relying on outside help to feed its 22 million populace since the mid-1990s due to economic mismanagement, loss of Soviet subsidies and years of bad weather. More than 200,000—some say 2 million—have since died of hunger and hunger-related diseases.

Last month, the U.N. World Food Program resumed shipments of food aid weeks after cutting food aid to nearly 6.5 million needy North Koreans due to a shortage of supplies.

WFP said the flow of aid had been restored thanks to a flurry of last-minute emergency contributions from Germany, New Zealand, Canada and Norway, but had warned 1.5 million people will still go hungry within six weeks without more donations.

Foreign donors have given more than 8 million tons of food to North Korea since the mid-1990s.

its term for nuclear weapons development.

The North blamed the United States for the lack of breakthroughs in last month's six-nation talks, and accused Washington of raising tensions on the Korean peninsula by holding the joint military exercises.

Washington and Seoul say the annual drills, which run through March

28, are routine exercises.

"The Korean people, who consider independence to be their life and soul, are keeping a close eye on the U.S. moves, while further strengthening the self-defense nuclear deterrent to cope with them," said North Korea's official news agency, KCNA.

A second round of six-nation talks ended in Beijing in late February

with little progress. Washington insisted on a "complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling" of all the North's nuclear facilities. Pyongyang said it would dismantle its nuclear programs only if the United States provides economic aid and security guarantees.

The talks involved the United States, the two Koreas, China, Rus-

sia and Japan. They agreed to meet again by July.

Prime Minister Goh Kun—who is leading South Korea's government until the Constitutional Court rules on whether to oust Roh or to restore his suspended presidential powers—moved quickly to dismiss the North's threats.

Amid political uncertainty, "establishing a solid security posture is more important than anything else," Goh said in a speech Wednesday at the Air Force Academy's graduation ceremony.

"We must further strengthen our alliance with the United States," he said.

South Korea's parliament voted Friday to impeach Roh for alleged election-law violations and incompetence. The Constitutional Court has 180 days to rule.

North Korea has bitterly denounced the impeachment, initiated by South Korea's conservative opposition—which favors a tougher stance toward the North.

"The U.S. is chiefly to blame for the incident," KCNA said. "The U.S. egged the South Korean political quacks, obsessed by the greed for power, on to stage such incident in a bid to install an ultra-right pro-U.S. regime there."

About 1,500 people protested the impeachment Wednesday night in Seoul. The number of protesters was sharply lower than the 50,000 who gathered over the weekend to hold candles and chant for Roh's reinstatement.

S. Korea court reviews impeachment vs Roh

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—The Constitutional Court began its review Thursday of South Korea's first-ever presidential impeachment, starting what could be months of deliberations on whether to restore Roh Moo-hyun to the presidency.

The opposition-controlled National Assembly needs at least six of the nine judges to rule in favor of its vote last Friday to impeach Roh. The justices have 180 days to decide.

Kim Ki-choon, the chief prosecutor in the case, has said the hearing could take several months. The opposition Grand National Party lawmaker and chairman of the National Assembly's Legislation and Judiciary Committee is leading a team of lawyers arguing that Parliament's decision was legal.

Roh has appointed a former adviser on civil affairs, Moon Jae-in, to assemble his defense team.

Late Wednesday, Moon submitted a 10-page report to the court outlining his team's arguments and calling the case "a historic precedent."

No details of the report were available.

Parliament voted to impeach Roh for alleged election law violations, corruption scandals and economic incompetence. The court must decide if those reasons were sufficient to impeach the president.

The Constitutional Court justices will review the basics of the case, but will not take testimony, court official Jun Sang-bo said Thursday.

Prime Minister Goh Kun has stepped in as acting president until the court rules on whether to oust Roh or restore his presidential powers.

The initial shock from the unprecedented impeachment has subsided; financial markets have leveled out and protests against the impeachment have dwindled.

The move was initiated by South Korea's conservative opposition—which favors a tougher stance toward North Korea.

On Wednesday, Goh called for a stronger alliance with Washington and dismissed the North's claim that Roh's impeachment reflected U.S. interference to "install an ultra-right pro-U.S. regime" in Seoul.

North Korea has called the impeachment a U.S.-engineered coup and blamed political "instability" in the south for scrapping inter-Korean economic talks earlier this week.

South Korea has ordered heightened military vigilance against the North and is going ahead with annual joint military exercises with the United States, scheduled to begin Sunday, to test the allies' defense readiness.

Pyongyang on Wednesday declared it would strengthen its "nuclear deterrent" in response to the planned military drills.

Washington and Seoul say the drills, which run through March 28, are only routine defense exercises.



Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian, right, waves to his supporters during a campaign in Chiayi, Taiwan, Wednesday, March 17, 2004.

Nobel laureate endorses Taiwan president

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—President Chen Shui-bian won a crucial endorsement in his bid for re-election this weekend from Taiwan's influential Nobel laureate, a Presidential Office spokesman said Wednesday.

Lee Yuan-tseh endorsed Chen four years ago, and his backing was widely believed to be key to the president's upset victory. But Lee has been critical of Chen's presidency, and many doubted he would support Chen this time.

Chen's opponent in Saturday's vote is ex-Vice President Lien Chan, chair-

man of the Nationalist Party. Both campaigns say the race is too close to call.

Presidential Office spokesman James Huang told The Associated Press that Lee issued a statement Wednesday saying he is again backing Chen and the ruling Democratic Progressive Party.

Lee, winner of the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1986, is the head of Academia Sinica, Taiwan's top state-funded research center. He is widely respected for his integrity, intellect and commitment to improving Taiwan.

Huang quoted Lee as saying: "Four years ago, I endorsed Chen Shui-bian. Four years has elapsed, and I must admit in terms of the ability to run the country, the DPP has a lot of room to improve. But in terms of ideals and momentum to carry out reforms, the DPP is still the better choice."

Huang also quoted Lee as saying he hopes Chen will continue to crack down on corruption, carry out institutional reforms, narrow the gap between rich and poor and improve relations with rival China.

World

Bomb destroys Baghdad hotel, killing 27

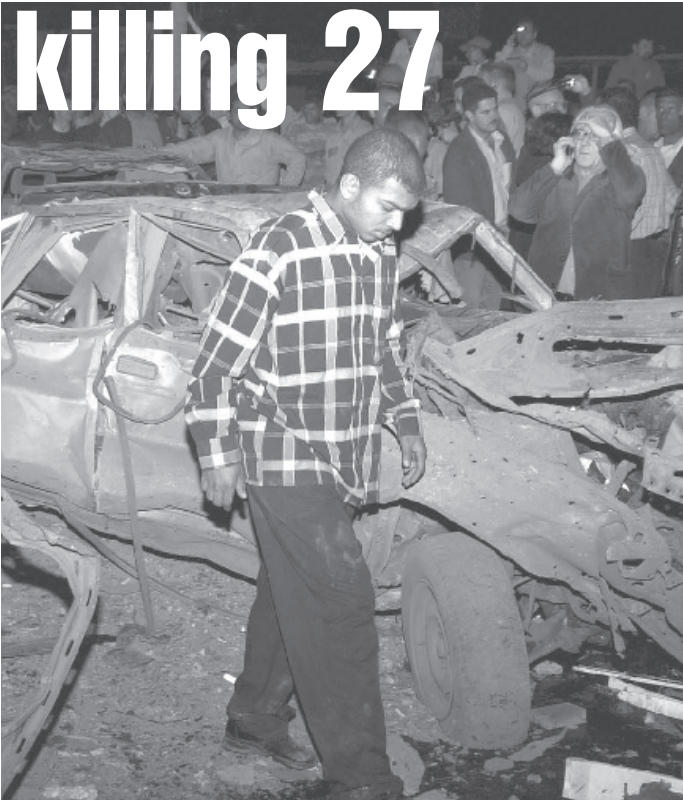
By JIM KRANE and HAMZA HENDAWI
AP WRITERS

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP)—A thunderous car bomb tore apart a five-story hotel catering to foreigners in the heart of Baghdad on Wednesday night, killing 27 people and showing the continued vulnerability of civilians to terror attacks

just days before the anniversary of the start of the Iraq war. Flames and heavy smoke burst skyward from the Mount Lebanon Hotel, torching nearby homes, offices and shops. Rescuers pulled bodies from the rubble and searched for other victims of the attack, which wounded 41 people.

There was no official word on who carried out the attack but a U.S. counterterrorism official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said Jordanian Islamic militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi is among those suspected of playing a key role. Dazed and wounded people stumbled from the wreckage,

marked by a jagged, 20-foot-wide crater. A father cradled his young daughter, who was limp in his arms. Coated in dust, some rescuers dug through the debris with bare hands as uniformed firefighters fought the blaze and ambulance workers stood by with orange stretchers. “It was a huge boom followed



AP

Rescue workers look for survivors after a huge car bomb destroyed a five-story hotel in central Baghdad, Wednesday March 17, 2004, killing at least 27.

by complete darkness and then the red glow of a fire,” said 16-year-old Walid Mohammed Abdel-Maguid, who lives near the hotel. A U.S. soldier a mile away said the blast—which took place about 8 p.m.—felt as though it were next door. Army Col. Ralph Baker of the 1st Armored Division estimated that the bomb contained 1,000 pounds of explosives. He said the bomb was a mix of plastic explosives and artillery shells. That was the same mixture of explosives used in the Aug. 19 suicide attack on the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad, which killed 22 people. Americans, Britons, Egyptians as well as other foreigners were staying at the Mount Lebanon Hotel, said Baghdad resident Faleh Kalhan. But some residents in the area said they believed guests left the hotel a week ago after its management received threats. If true, many casualties were likely in adjacent buildings. The British Broadcasting Corp. reported that two Britons were among the wounded. The blast ignited at least eight cars, one of which was hurled into a store. Some vehicles were little more than mangled piles of metal. The explosion blew bricks, air conditioners, furniture, wires and other debris hundreds of yards from the hotel. The Mount Lebanon was a so-called soft target because it did not have concrete blast barriers and other security measures that protect offices of the U.S.-led coalition and buildings where Westerners live and work. The Bush administration offered prayers for the victims but said such attacks would not change U.S. policy. “Democracy is taking root in Iraq and there is no turning back,” said Scott McClellan, White House spokesman. “This

is a time of testing, but the terrorists will not prevail.” The attack came just three days before the first anniversary of the start of the U.S.-led war to topple Saddam Hussein. It took place behind Firdaus Square, where Iraqis toppled a bronze statue of Saddam on April 9 with the help of U.S. Marines who had just entered the center of the capital. After the blast, American forces and Iraqi ambulances hurried to the scene. Dozens of U.S. soldiers in Humvees and Bradley fighting vehicles cleared crowds. Earlier, two U.S. soldiers tried to help pull bodies from the wreckage of the hotel, but angry Iraqis pushed them back. The explosion left a crater 20 feet wide and 10 feet deep, and American forensic experts studied the scene. The area of the blast, Karrada, is a mix of residential and commercial buildings. The blast shook the nearby Palestine Hotel, where many foreign contractors and journalists are based. It also damaged the nearby Swan Lake Hotel, home to many foreigners, including several journalists. The power of the bomb left the bureau of Arabic Al-Jazeera satellite television in a shambles, with windows smashed and televisions hanging from cords. “All of our offices in this hotel are nearly destroyed. I was typing some information for a story and the windows blew in and covered me,” said the bureau’s senior editor, Mohammed Abdul Rahim, a Syrian. No one in Swan Lake Hotel appeared to be wounded. Gwenaelle Lenoir, a reporter for French Channel 3 television, was dazed. “We were just finishing mixing our story and we heard a very big boom and there were no more windows and no more lights,” she said.

GARDENIA
+RED
3/4

Eight killed in Kosovo ethnic violence

By FISNIK ABRASHI
AP WRITER

KOSOVSKA MITROVICA, Serbia-Montenegro (AP)—Ethnic Albanians traded gunfire with Serbs on Wednesday after blaming them for the drownings of two boys. The clashes left eight dead and more than 300 injured in one of the worst days of Serb-Albanian bloodshed since the end of the Kosovo war in 1999.

Riots broke out in virtually every city in the province—and in at least four enclaves where Serbs live—illustrating the failure of U.N. and NATO efforts to snuff out ethnic hatreds and set the province on the path of reconciliation.

Protests also swept Belgrade, the capital of Serbia-Montenegro. Thousands took to the streets, demanding that the government act to protect their ethnic kin in Kosovo. Demonstrators in the southern Serb city of Nis set a mosque ablaze—and then prevented fire fighters from putting out the flames.

In a melee near Kosovo's capital, Pristina, hundreds of ethnic Albanians broke through barricades erected by U.N. police and NATO-led peacekeepers to march on the Serb village of Caglavica. Hand grenades were thrown and Serb houses

were set on fire, Joseph said.

In Pristina itself, U.N. cars also were torched. In the nearby city of Kosovo Polje, dozens of Serb houses and a hospital were set ablaze, ethnic Albanians appeared to be in control on the streets.

Late Wednesday, armored personnel carriers and police in riot gear were placed in and around the U.N. headquarters in Pristina, to prevent attacks against the building housing the international administrators of the disputed province.

Riots also were reported in the western city of Pec, crowds clashed with peacekeepers and police in the town of Gracanica, and cars were destroyed in the city of Gnjilane.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan condemned the violence, saying it "jeopardizes the stability of Kosovo and the security of all its people," according to a U.N. spokesman.

U.N. officials, diplomats and Kosovo's leadership held an emergency meeting in Pristina and issued an unusual joint statement appealing for calm.

"The violence must stop and it must stop immediately," the statement said. The officials called on demonstrators to disperse and said those responsible would be prosecuted.

The United States called on



Injured people are led away as UN peacekeepers step in to separate clashing ethnic Albanians and Serbs in Kosovska Mitrovica, in northern Kosovo, where several were injured and five reported killed, on Wednesday, March 17, 2004.

Kosovo's political leaders to use their influence to restore calm. "The escalating violence must end," the State Department said. "It threatens the process of democratization and reconciliation in Kosovo, and threatens the very future of Kosovo."

The violence began in the ethnically divided city of Kos-

ovska Mitrovica amid reports that Serbs in a nearby village set a dog on a group of ethnic Albanian boys, sending three of them fleeing into an icy river, where two drowned and a third was missing. Tensions grew as the morning wore on, fanned by a 13-year-old who said his younger brother slipped off

his back as he tried to swim for safety.

After authorities recovered two bodies, ethnic Albanians and Serbs gathered near a bridge over the Ibar River that separates Kosovska Mitrovica, long the flashpoint of tensions in this southern province of Serbia-Montenegro. The two

sides traded insults, threw rocks and charged each other several times before gunfire rang out and rioters set U.N. police cars ablaze.

The melee grew before police could separate the sides, with protesters hurling rocks and other objects at NATO-led peacekeepers.

The peacekeepers and Romanian special police units moved in, firing tear gas, rubber bullets and stun grenades to stop the ethnic Albanians from surging across the bridge toward the Serb side of the city, where another crowd had gathered.

"I heard several bursts of gunfire, and then just felt pain and went down on the ground," said Ridvan Lahu, 41, who was shot.

The dead included six ethnic Albanians and two Serbs, said Derek Chappell, the chief U.N. police spokesman. A U.N. police officer shot and killed one of the ethnic Albanian victims, who was attempting to hit the officer with a brick in the western town of Pec, Chappell said.

In the predominantly ethnic Albanian southern side of Kosovska Mitrovica, hospital workers counted more than 200 hurt, including several who were shot. Floors were stained with blood, and doctors appealed for blood donations—even from weeping relatives.

DPW005

DPW006



World

Life & Style

tribune subscription

'Lost' papers of Doyle to be auctioned

By JANE WARDELL
AP WRITER

LONDON (AP)—It was a mystery worthy of Sherlock Holmes himself.

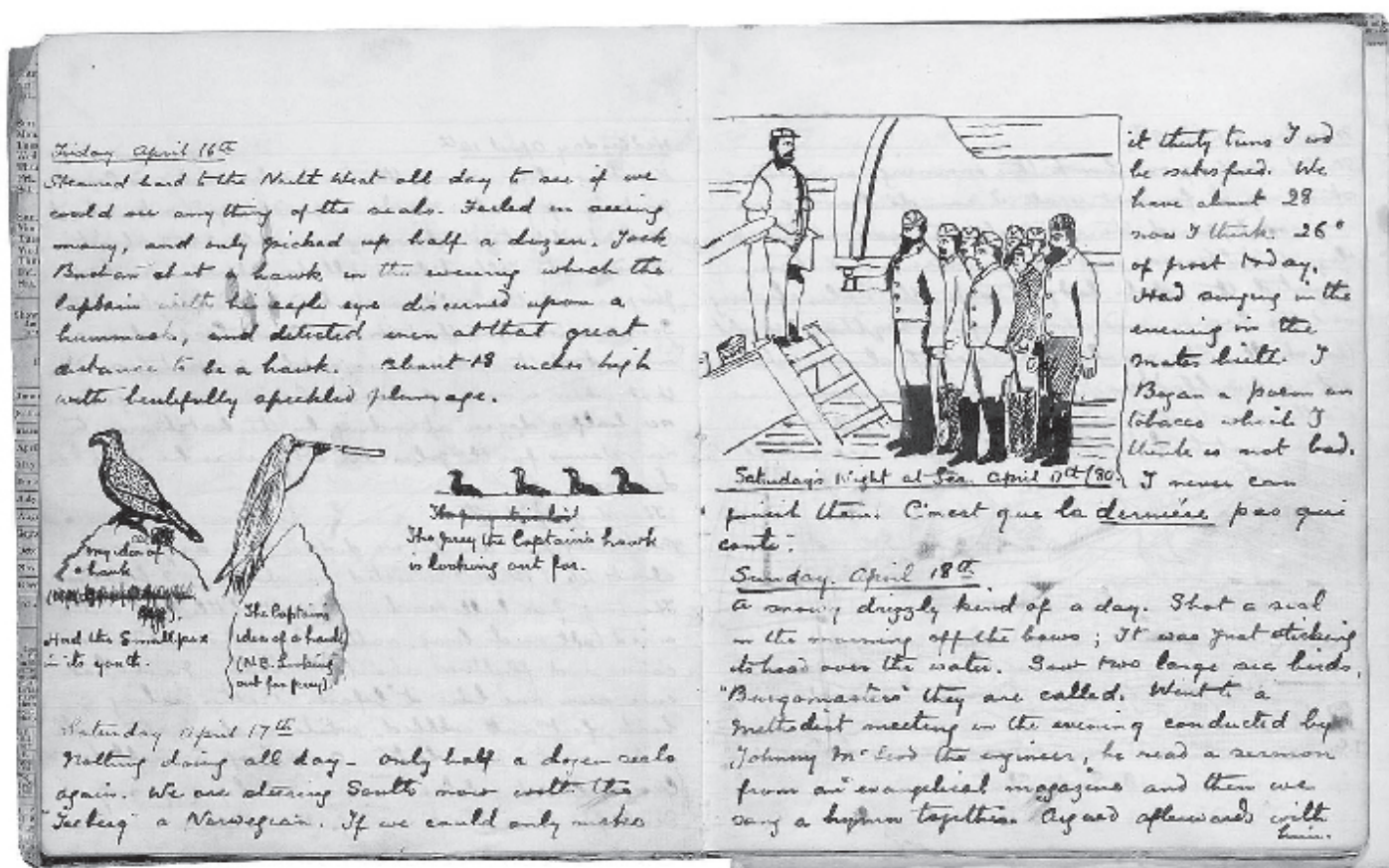
More than 40 years ago, private papers and personal artifacts that belonged to the fictional sleuth's creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, were reportedly spirited away during a family dispute over the author's estate.

In the intervening years, many scholars began to doubt the existence of the manuscripts and sketches by the physician who created one of fiction's best-loved characters. Others feared they had been destroyed.

Christie's auction house provided an ending to the story on Wednesday, saying the "lost" collection had been held for decades at a London law office.

Christie's expects the treasure trove of more than 3,000 items to fetch up to \$3.6 million at a London auction on May 19.

A highlight of the collection is the author's drawing for the first appearance of Sherlock Holmes in the novel "A Study in Scarlet," with the original title of the book, "A Tangled Skein," crossed through.



Released photo of a page from a log book Sherlock Holmes author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle kept during time on "SS Hope", a Peterhead whaler, which forms part of collection of lost papers and personal effects to be auctioned in London on May 19, 2004.

"A Study in Scarlet" was published in 1887. Over the following 40 years, Conan Doyle published 56 short stories and four novels featuring Holmes and his faithful sidekick, Dr. Watson,

who, like Conan Doyle, was a physician, a writer and had served in the British army. The author died in 1930.

Scholars have long been tantalized by the prospect of find-

ing the papers. Author John Dickson Carr referred to them in a biography published in 1949 but no more was seen or heard of them.

Jane Flower, a manuscript

consultant at Christie's, said the collection had been held at the unidentified law firm for several decades until the legal dispute was resolved and that they were returned to the beneficiaries

of Ana Conan Doyle, the wife of the author's youngest son, Adrian.

The artifacts then remained sealed in cardboard boxes for a few years until the family called Christie's last year. Ana Conan Doyle's beneficiaries are the vendors for the auction.

Flower, who had the task of breaking the seals, said she was astounded at the extent of the archive when the documents began tumbling out.

"It is an extraordinary collection," she said. "I have been doing this for 25 years and it was one of the most remarkable experiences of those 25 years."

There is considerable correspondence relating to Conan Doyle's involvement in numerous court cases where he believed a miscarriage of justice had occurred. The archive also contains the manuscript of the author's multi-volume history of the Boer War, in which he served as a military doctor, and World War I. Many other pieces in the collection have a very personal slant, such as the brass nameplate Conan Doyle hung outside his fledgling medical practice in Southsea, southern England, in 1882.

'The Known World' wins fiction prize

By HILLEL ITALIE
AP NATIONAL WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Edward P. Jones, who ended a 10-year absence from publishing with his acclaimed novel "The Known World," won the fiction prize Thursday night from the National Book Critics Circle.

Other awards Thursday went to Paul Hendrickson's "Sons of Mississippi: A Story of Race and Its Legacy" for general nonfiction and William Taubman's "Khrushchev: The Man and His Era," for biography-autobiography. Rebecca Solnit's "River of Shadows," a study of high-speed photography and other 19th-century technology, won in the criticism category, and Susan Stewart's "Columbarium" was cited for poetry.

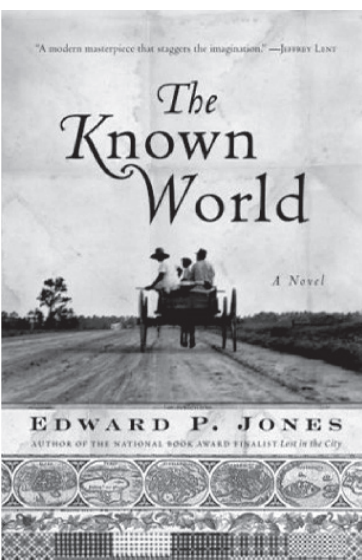
Studs Terkel, 91, the oral historian and self-described champion of the "uncensored," received a lifetime achievement prize. "I feel redeemed tonight, and I haven't seen Mel Gibson's film yet," joked Terkel, referring to "The Passion of the Christ."

"The Known World," the story of a black slave owner and the plantation's collapse after his death, was a finalist last fall for the National Book Awards and is now in its eighth printing, with 100,000 copies in print.

Jones, 53, won the PEN/

Hemingway Award in 1993 and was a finalist for the National Book Award for his first book, "Lost in the City," a collection of short stories about life in 1950s-1970s Washington, where Jones grew up.

But the author, a former proofreader for Tax Notes, a



trade magazine, took years to get going on "The Known World." He acknowledges being a slow worker who doesn't like writing anything until he has the story constructed in his mind. He also had a computer incompatible with other online systems. And sometimes, frankly, he didn't feel like writing.

"There were days I decided I wasn't in the mood, so I just put it off," he told The Associ-

ated Press last fall.

In accepting the award Thursday, Jones said he felt so embarrassed about the delay that when he finally finished he couldn't bear to tell his agent, Eric Simonoff, on the phone. Instead, he sent a letter to Simonoff, who duly left a complimentary message on Jones' answering machine.

"I still have that message," Jones said.

Monica Ali's "Brick Lane," Caryl Phillips' "A Distant Shore," Richard Powers' "The Time of Our Singing" and Tobias Wolff's "Old School" were the other fiction nominees.

Finalists in nonfiction categories included William T. Vollman's seven-volume, 3,300-page "Rising Up and Rising Down" and Susan Sontag's "Regarding the Pain of Others." Sontag's book is a partial refutation of her influential "On Photography," which won an NBCC award in 1978 and contended that repeated exposure to images of violence and suffering numb our emotions.

The National Book Critics Circle, founded in 1974, is a not-for-profit organization of about 750 book editors and critics. The NBCC awards are prestigious, if not profitable, offering no cash prizes.

Plagiarist Blair sees an upside in NYT debacle

NEW YORK—Less than a year after he left The New York Times in disgrace, after mortifying the paper with his plagiarism and fabrications, sullying journalists everywhere by implication and receiving some of the most vicious reviews ever written for his book about the events, Jayson Blair makes an astonishing statement.

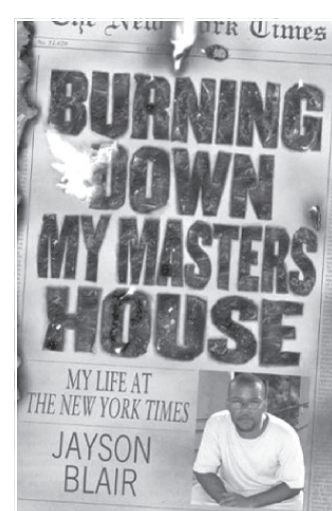
"If I had it (to do) over again, I'd go through it all again so I could get diagnosed" with manic-depression, which happened last May after he left the Times and checked into a mental hospital in Connecticut.

You mean go through the ... "Everything," says Blair, toward the end of a lunchtime interview in Rockefeller Center last week. "Everything again, to get diagnosed."

The psychiatrist he's seeing and the five medications he's taking mean, he says, "Now there are no fingernails scratching on my brain anymore," no pain, and that would not have happened, he believes, without this or a similar trauma.

The revelation is just another step in an interview, a book—the provocatively titled "Burning Down My Masters' House"—and a week of high-profile publicity for Blair that could, like his disorder, be called bipolar.

While decrying his deeds, myriad interviewers—including Katie Couric, Larry King and Bill O'Reilly—have given him golden publicity. Encounters with Blair, 27, are filled with



ambiguity, evoking both sympathy and, well, uneasiness.

In the preface, Blair, who is black, says that in addition to the "obvious allusion to slavery," he means to say in the title that his deceptions let down colleagues, family, friends "and myself." In interviews, he says he thought at first he'd be writing more about race, from getting hired initially through an affirmative action program to perhaps being given more opportunities and leeway because the Times wanted to have diversity. Then he decided his situation was more complex.

But isn't all this a stretch? Blair—a charming and ingratiating interviewee—breaks into a conspiratorial grin. "... it's a good title," he says.

Likewise, the book is filled with references to race, manic-depression and the extensive drug and alcohol use he says he

once practiced to "self-medicate" his undiagnosed condition. On the other hand, he doesn't want to use any of these as an excuse; he says he takes full responsibility for all his deceitful actions. That's noble, but why not blame manic-depression, a recognized disease that could explain a lot?

"That's a good question," he answers seriously, another disarming but unsettling gesture: Should one feel flattered or taken in? "If I had been more mature, I would have gone for help." Earlier, he had said, "I was never so impaired that I couldn't make choices, and I made bad choices. ... I was aware that they were wrong."

On one level, he appears to understand the problems others have with his locutions, especially when he apologizes repeatedly and promises to "make amends"—all the while enjoying the fruits of a \$150,000 book contract, an additional \$22,000 for British serial rights and, of all things, \$2,000 for the Hebrew rights.

Self-mockingly, he calls himself "an idealistic liar." Another time he says, "I'm not a demon. ... I'm troubled." And about holding himself out as a cautionary example for others while becoming a minor celebrity? "I have a book deal, I'm well-known now, I have opportunities in the future. ... Yeah, I don't know if my example is a great example."

R. Kelly child porn charges dropped

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—R. Kelly escaped child pornography charges in Florida when prosecutors announced Wednesday they were dropping all 12 counts against the top-selling R&B singer.

The decision followed a judge's ruling last week that detectives illegally seized photographs allegedly showing the singer having sex with an underage girl, meaning they could not be used against him.

Prosecutors decided not to ap-

peal the ruling by Circuit Judge Dennis Maloney, choosing instead to abandon the charges.

"These pictures that were found in Mr. Kelly's possession have been suppressed by the court, and the state cannot prove this case without the evidence," prosecutor Bradford H. Copley wrote in the Wednesday court filing.

The 37-year-old Kelly—

whose real name is Robert Sylvester Kelly—still faces 14 child pornography charges in Chicago and has pleaded innocent. Those charges were not affected by the ending of the case in Polk County, which is just east of Tampa.

Last month, seven of the original 21 child pornography charges against Kelly in Chicago were dismissed.



R. Kelly

"My faith in the system of justice has never wavered, and with this victory behind me, I look forward to clearing my name in Illinois," Kelly said in a statement. "As I've said before, I am confident that when all the facts come out, people will see that I'm no criminal."

After a hearing Thursday, Maloney agreed with the singer's attorneys that Polk County sheriff's detectives did not have enough evidence to legally justify a search of Kelly's Daven-

port home when the deputies asked a judge for a warrant in June 2002.

The photographs were on a digital camera that was wrapped in a towel inside a duffel bag.

Deputies had earlier found marijuana in a home Kelly rented for three business associates. They then sought a warrant to search the house where Kelly was staying nearby to look for drugs.

During an initial search for drugs, detective Robert Mateo said he observed video cameras and an "unusual" amount of adult pornography in a cabinet in a room marked "Private." The detective then sought a second search warrant to look for child pornography.

The next day, Mateo was granted the warrant by Polk Circuit Court Judge Mary Catherine Green. Mateo returned to Kelly's home and wrote in a report that he examined one of the video cameras and scanned the images, finding several pictures of two women performing sex acts and other photos of Kelly in a sex act.

Kelly's attorneys said the affidavit Mateo submitted in seeking the warrant wasn't adequate because it was based on unspecified information from Chicago authorities and no link was established between the discovery of marijuana and the presence of cameras and child pornography.

Critic: 'Dr. Phil' isn't doctor for all

By LYNN ELBER
AP TELEVISION WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—When Neal David Sutz walked through the Paramount studio gate, he was looking forward to seeing a psychologist he respected, talk show host Phil McGraw.

Sutz didn't know he was about to get caught in the awkward intersection of entertainment and counseling where "Dr. Phil" holds ground.

A mental health activist who himself had undergone treatment, Sutz hoped to attend a taping and connect with

McGraw afterward to enlist his help in a public information campaign.

Instead, the Mesa, Ariz., paralegal student was stopped short by paperwork. He and other would-be audience members were asked to sign a waiver attesting they didn't suffer from mental illness and weren't under psychiatric care.

The waiver also said that McGraw's statements shouldn't be considered therapy or a substitute for any form of therapy. Talking to a show representative, Sutz was told he could attend but couldn't talk to Dr. Phil or participate

in the show—for Sutz's own protection.

He left instead. The incident, which occurred last fall, has weighed on him; so much for "Doctor" Phil, he said in an interview.

The disclaimer signals "that his advice is not real medical, psychological advice at all," said Sutz. "It is pure entertainment and he should stop insinuating that it is anything but that, especially not real counseling."

The blend of Hollywood and psychology in TV shows like "Dr. Phil" offers cause for concern, said Atlanta psychologist Robert Simmermon. "It is important to distinguish between

entertainment and actual treatment. It's not done very well," Simmermon said.

It's likely that some of the millions of people who tune into "Dr. Phil" ignore disclaimers and view it as therapy, Simmermon said. "I think it does need to be studied."

McGraw has always been explicit about his show's intent, said Terry Wood, executive vice president of programming for Paramount Domestic Television, which produces the syndicated "Dr. Phil."

"Phil has said on the air many, many times that we are not doing therapy here," Wood said.

Julie Andrews sings in 'Diaries' sequel

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Her four-octave voice silenced by a throat operation in 1997, Julie Andrews is once again singing in the movies.

Musical scenes she shot recently for "The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement" may not feature the soaring tones of "The Sound of Music," but Andrews' singing still brought tears to the eyes of even hardened stage hands.

The film is a sequel to the 2001 hit about an American schoolgirl (Anne Hathaway) who inherits the throne of a small European country and is trained for the role by her regal grandmother (Andrews).

Set for an Aug. 11 release, the film contains a scene in which the girl, now 21 and facing marriage, recalls a song she heard in early childhood, "Your Crowning Glory," and she cajoles her grandmother into singing it. Later in the movie, Andrews' character sings the number again, this time to the granddaughter's friends.

Disney is keeping the song under wraps, but those who have heard it say the rendition is reminiscent of the old Julie Andrews.

"She's everything you want Julie Andrews to be; she's such a professional," said the film's music supervisor, Dawn Soler, who was there when the actress prerecorded the song,



Julie Andrews poses at a luncheon held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif., on Feb. 9, 2004.

as well as when she sang it to playback during filming at Universal Studios.

"She nailed the song on the first take. I looked around and I saw grips with tears in their

eyes," Soler told The Associated Press.

Andrews has done some limited singing on TV specials in recent years. But her manager, Steve Sauer, says "those songs were done in the Rex Harrison style: half-talking, half-singing."

In "Princess Diaries 2," Andrews begins "Your Crowning Glory" with some talking, but then transitions into full song, although with a far more limited vocal range than she was once capable of before the surgery.

"It's an old-fashioned song with classic-type lyrics," explains the lyricist, Lorraine Feather, daughter of the late musicologist Leonard Feather. (She lives in Half Moon Bay, Calif., and the composer, Larry Grossman, works from New York. They wrote "Your Crowning Glory" via telephone and the Internet.)

Grossman, who had previously written songs and special material for Andrews, was the star's personal choice to compose her music for "Princess Diaries 2." "It's written in just one octave, so it wouldn't be vocally demanding," he told the AP.

"I've worked with Julie, and I knew what she was capable of. This does not reflect that; it's more of a tranquil song. She told me it works beautifully," Grossman said.

wallace

Moocher wears out welcome by criticizing the handouts

By Abigail Van Buren

DEAR ABBY: My husband's friend, "Kevin," has been coming to our house once a week for the past eight years. He is always broke and looking for a handout, even though he has a full-time job.

In the beginning, I tried to help him by inviting him to stay for dinner once in a while. Now he has started to complain: The steak isn't cooked the way he likes it, or I don't toss the salad the way his mom does. (By the way, Kevin is 35 and still lives at home.)

The reason he always needs money is that he spends every paycheck on drugs.

I recently gave birth to my first child and I don't want him to be around someone like Kevin, but my husband refuses to stop his friend from coming to our house. How can I—politely—get this moocher out of my home without causing trouble between my husband and myself?

NEW MOM

DEAR NEW MOM: That's easy. Stop feeding that moocher steak, go vegetarian, and toss the salads YOUR way. I predict he'll be out of your hair as soon as the gravy train stops rolling.

P.S. You don't mention what kind of drugs this man is addicted to, but he should not be around your baby while he is under the influence. If your husband continues to object, explain to him that it could be considered child endangerment.

DEAR ABBY: My 13-year-old daughter was molested by her half-brother for almost a year before she found the courage to tell us.

When we found out, we did everything we could to help her overcome this. We even moved out of state to give her a fresh start.

The trouble is, her half-brother has contacted my husband again. He wants to visit us. I do not want him in this house -- and my daughter feels the same way. Some family members say I am denying my husband a relationship with his son. I'm not trying to keep them apart; I'm trying to protect my daughter. I have reached the point that I will leave and take my kids with me before I'll expose them to this again. Am I wrong?

STRONGLY AGAINST VISIT

DEAR STRONGLY: No, you are not wrong. You are a concerned and protective mother, and your first obligation is to protect your daughter from her predator. Tell the "family members" that your husband can visit his son, but not vice versa. And make no apologies.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I are anticipating the arrival of our first child in two months. We have registered at a local store for the items we will need.

A close friend has graciously offered to give me a baby shower, but she refuses to add where we are registered to the invitation. She says it's poor etiquette.

Isn't the whole point of a baby shower to receive gifts? Is pointing people in the right direction so wrong?

The invitations go out in less than a week. Help, ASAP!

BAFFLED IN ORANGE, CA.

DEAR BAFFLED: Sorry, but I agree with your friend. While it is understood that showers are all about getting gifts, a more refined way to get the message across is for the hostess to verbally communicate where the guest of honor is registered at the time the invitees RSVP.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$10 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)



Dear Abby

Presley: Jackson was not inappropriate

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Lisa Marie Presley clarified her remarks in an Australian TV interview, saying in a statement Wednesday that she never saw her ex-husband, Michael Jackson, engage in inappropriate behavior with kids.

Elvis Presley's daughter, on a concert tour in Australia, said in an interview broadcast Monday that she saw things she "couldn't do anything about" during her 1994-96 marriage to Jackson.

"I was in no way referring to seeing something inappropriate with children, as I have stated publicly before. I never have," Presley said in a statement released by her Los Angeles publicist, Paul Bloch.

Without elaboration, Presley said during the talk show interview that she felt powerless during the marriage to Jackson, who is charged in Santa Barbara County with child molestation. The interview aired on Australian Broadcasting Corp.'s "Enough Rope."

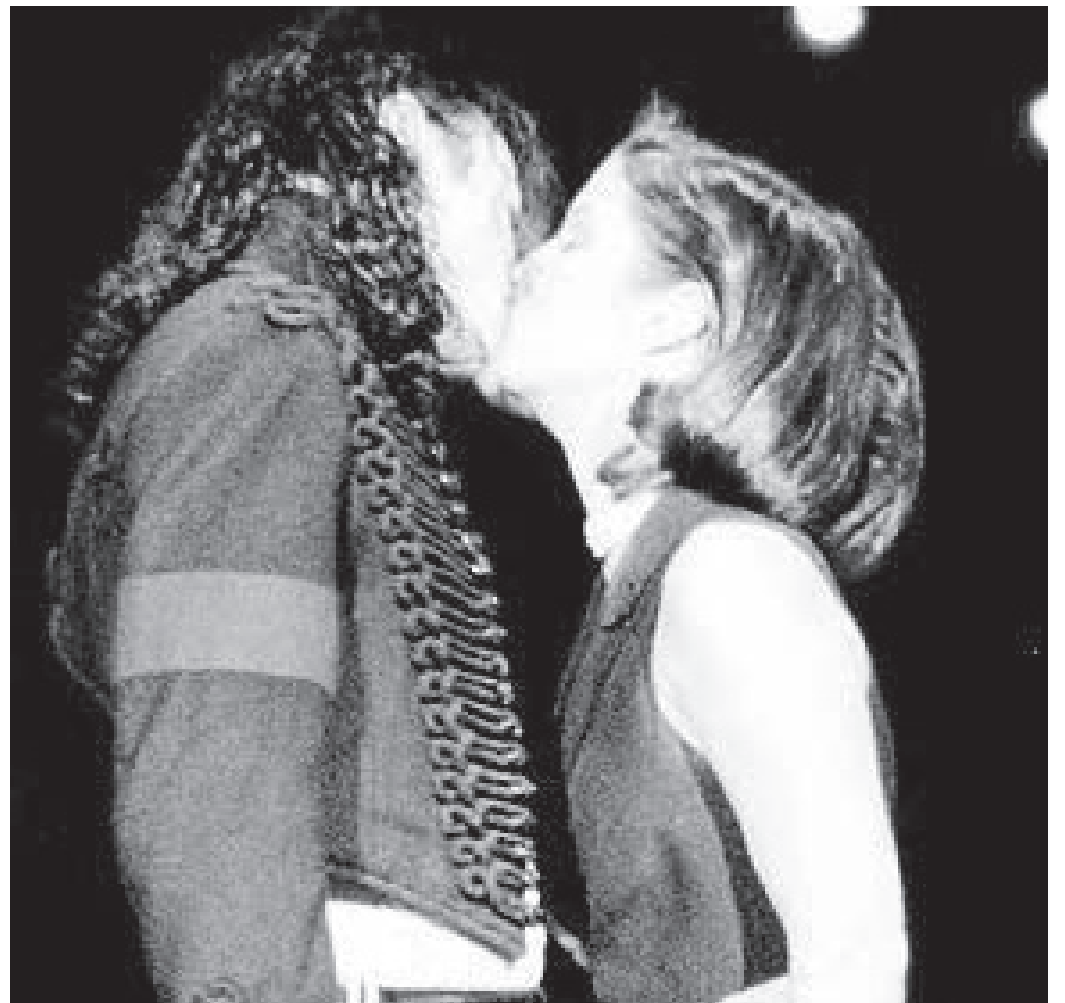
"Unfortunately, due to the recent media frenzy surrounding Michael Jackson, my comments during a recent TV interview in Australia regarding him were completely taken out of context and erroneously read into," Presley said in the statement.

"In saying I saw things, I was specifically referring to things in that relationship with us that went on between us at the time as husband and wife," she said.

Her interview comments led to widespread speculation about the 45-year-old pop star.

Presley said she felt "powerless in a lot of ways, in terms of ... realizing that I was part of a machine, and seeing things going on that I couldn't do anything about," she said. "And don't ask me what sort of things, because I'm not going to answer. But just stuff."

Jackson has pleaded innocent to seven counts of performing lewd or lascivious acts on a child under 14 and two counts of administering an intoxicating agent, reportedly wine. He is free on \$3 million bail pending trial.



Lawyer to press Jackson custody issue

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Attorney Gloria Allred said Wednesday that Los Angeles County officials have turned down her request that Michael Jackson's three children be removed from his custody, but said she would bring the matter to a juvenile court judge.

Allred said Jackson should lose custody of the children because of his past behavior and the child molestation charges against him. She does not represent the children, but said she was acting because she believes they are in danger of physical or sexual abuse.

Allred asked Santa Barbara authorities last year to investigate the children's welfare, citing the molestation charges, Jackson's admission that he sometimes shares his bedroom with children, and a November 2002 incident in which he dangled his baby from a balcony.

In January, after Jackson moved from Santa Barbara

County to Beverly Hills, she asked the Los Angeles County Department of Child and Family Services to investigate.

Allred said the department notified her Friday that they would not remove the children from Jackson's custody and make them dependents of the court. Department officials said they couldn't comment because of confidentiality laws.

Allred said she filed an application Wednesday asking that the presiding judge of Los Angeles County Juvenile Court begin proceedings to take the children from Jackson and place their care under the court's jurisdiction.

One of Jackson's criminal attorneys, Benjamin Brafman, said Allred had no good reason to get involved.

"I think it would be best if people who have noting to do with these proceedings stayed out of them rather than looking at Mr. Jackson's case as a ve-

hicle through which to engage in self-promotion," he said.

Allred said she would continue despite what she called Brafman's "personal attacks."

Jackson and his second wife, Deborah Rowe, agreed last month to hire a retired judge to handle an unspecified "family law matter" that was believed to concern custody and visitation arrangements for the couple's two children - a boy, 7, and a girl, who is 5 or 6, who reportedly live with Jackson.

Jackson has a third child, Prince Michael II, who is believed to be about 10 months old, but he has not disclosed the identity of the boy's mother.

Jackson has pleaded innocent to seven counts of performing lewd or lascivious acts on a child under 14 and two counts of administering an intoxicating agent, reportedly wine. He remains free on \$3 million bail.

Thieves raid Elvis Museum jewelry stash

LAS VEGAS (AP)—In less than five minutes, thieves swiped \$325,000 worth of Elvis Presley's jewelry and kitsch.

But the Sunday night heist at the Elvis-A-Rama museum left behind a million-dollar gem: the King's blue suede shoes.

Museum owner Chris Davidson said the thieves stole up to 80 percent of the jewelry on display.

"By no means am I giving up hope," he said Wednesday.

Police said the suspects stole a tow truck and drove it into the museum's rear door, then used

lead pipes to break open three Plexiglas cases. The bandits were in the museum less than five minutes, police estimated.

Among the stolen inventory: a gold-plated handgun, a custom scarf, a bracelet and watch, Presley's Humes High School ring from 1953 and a Louisiana Hayride "E. Presley Day" ring from 1956.

Davidson's personal favorite was an "E.P." diamond pendant and chain, and a ruby and diamond star-shaped ring Presley bought in Las Vegas for \$75,000.

Rap mogul heads to London for fundraiser


LONDON (AP)—Rap mogul Russell Simmons will act as the ambassador for a hip-hop and R&B festival being held in London to raise funds for a youth charity, event organizers said.

Simmons will help raise awareness of the May 8-9 Urban Music Festival organized by The Prince's Trust, a charity founded by Prince Charles to aid disadvantaged young people.

Artists scheduled to appear at the Earls Court indoor ven-

ue in London include Jay-Z, Alicia Keys, Lemar, Dizzee Rascal and Jamelia, The Prince's Trust said in a statement Tuesday. The festival also will feature MC battles, urban art and disc jockeys.

"Hip-hop culture is being embraced globally to transform lives in a positive way," said Simmons in a statement. "The Prince of Wales and The Prince's Trust are wise to invest their time and resources in creating an Urban Music Festival for the U.K."



"I want to go shopping!"

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Sageen Tribune

Calvin and Hobbes

Adam@home

By Eugene Sheffer

Justin Jeffre, Sean Astin, Lesley Boone, Sally Jessy Raphael

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Having a crusader attitude will make all the difference in the world this year. Be a little stubborn if you think you are right. Be diverse in all that you do and you will meet the demands being put on you and accomplish your goals. Your numbers are 2, 13, 17, 29, 31, 40

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY



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Push to make others aware of what you are doing and how you believe it will help everyone on some level. If you can sell your ideas to others, you will put yourself in a favorable position. □□□



This is a perfect day to make some much-needed adjustments. Opportunities will manifest themselves in the most unusual places, so don't hesitate to talk about your dreams.□□□



Keeping a secret will be of utmost importance today. By disclosing what you are up to, you could blow a deal or your cover. Work by yourself; question your motives.□□□



Do something creative today that can be used to benefit others. The more you do to help make reforms, the better. □□□□



You will be misled if you are too gregarious. Tone down and observe what others are doing. Advancement may be at stake. □□



You can find an ideal romantic partner if you get out and do things that interest you. Get involved in talks that will stimulate your mind and broaden your perspective about projects you want to pursue. □□□□□



Prepare yourself well so that you can follow through with what's necessary as quickly as possible. Don't be lazy or waste time thinking about what you should be doing. □□□



Partnerships will be a little hard to handle if you don't take precautions and fully prepare. You can get on with your plans and get the praise you deserve. □□□



Your work ethics will pay off, so roll up your shirtsleeves and work alongside others for best results. Your team-player approach will put you in a leadership position. ☐☐☐



You should be developing your ideas today. If you find someone particularly inspiring, spend time discussing your plans together. Love and romance will be on your doorstep. □□□□



Take the initiative to follow what you feel is the best path and refrain from being led astray. Prepare to take a pass on what others are asking of you. □□



Your involvement in good causes will be rewarded today. You will begin to see the results of a job well done. Someone unusual, but interesting, will want to get to know you better. □□□□

BIRTHDAY BABY: You are proactive and never take the conventional route. Your outgoing nature always leads to adventure and excitement. You will chase your dreams until you reach your destiny.

Check out Eugenia's Web sites at astroadvice.com and eugenialast.com.

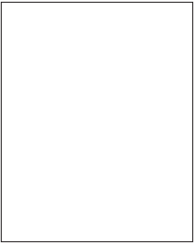


By Jim Davis

By Bryan Basset



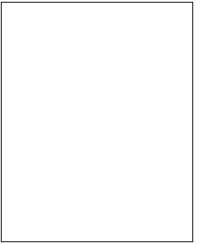
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